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Sundial

No. 3

PULPIT SCIENCE

IS IMMORTALITY A PHYSICAL FACT?

PULPIT SCIENCE

IS IMMORTALITY A PHYSICAL FACT?

BY

DENNIS HIRD

AUTHOR OF "TODDLE ISLAND" ETC.

FORMERLY

TUTOR AND LECTURER TO NON-COLL. STUDENTS, OXFORD, 1878 TO 1886;

CURATE AT ST. MICHAEL'S AND ALL ANGELS, BOURNEMOUTH, 1885 TO 1887;

CURATE AT CHRIST CHURCH, BATTERSEA, 1887;

SECRETARY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND TEMPERANCE SOCIETY

FOR THE DIOCESE OF LONDON, 1887 TO 1894;

RECTOR OF EASTNOR, 1894 TO 1896;

COMPELLED TO RENOUNCE ORDERS FOR WRITING

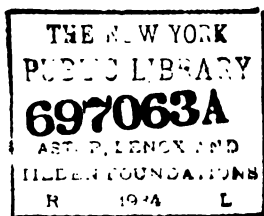
"A CHRISTIAN WITH TWO WIVES," 1896

CLEMENT WILSON

29 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.

1897

L.C.C.



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PREFACE

THERE is no question of such interest and importance to mankind, as the doctrine of immortality or the future life. The subject requires to be treated with the greatest reverence and learning.

To prevent mistakes, I may say that in this book—

1. I give no opinions of mine on the doctrine.
2. I make no reference to the Bible.
3. I do not inquire as to the teaching of science about the doctrine.
4. I have examined the science and reasoning of the Rev. J. W. Reynolds, and that only.

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Mr. Reynolds has quoted the Bible, which I think is beside the mark, in his inquiry, for he declares that, "Immortality is a physical fact." I have never learnt that the Bible is allowed to be an authority on physical facts.

The man who can show immortality to be a "physical fact," is a benefactor to his race.

It may be asked, why subject a book of this kind to a detailed scrutiny? For this reason: there is a great deal of toying with science, in certain quarters, by those who also hold the strictest orthodox views of theology, and the two cannot be held together.

To the man who believes in Evolution, there can be no such thing as the doctrine of "the Fall of man"; and, consequently, the orthodox teaching about "the Atonement," and kindred doctrines, are to the evolutionist untenable. Men must either accept Evolution, and all it involves, or reject it and go on their ancient path.

Dr. Temple's name, especially now he

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is Archbishop of Canterbury, being so prominently associated with this book, would, in the eyes of many, give it considerable weight.

As to my method of treatment, if any object either to the seeming flippancy or the plainness of speech, my apology must be sought in Prebendary Reynolds' own treatment. He openly accuses those men of science who are unable to find any hope of immortality in the universe, of being licentious and piggish. On page 86, he says—

“The fantastic folly of unbelievers which, admitting that everything in nature is true and reasonable, finds in this truth and reasonableness a plea for allowing licence to their passions—and forgets that man's reason is meant as a bridle and safeguard—is shown to be not only silliness, but wickedness, in denying truth and reasonableness to the fear of future doom, and to the hope of coming bliss.”

Why assume that men who cannot believe, what prebendaries *must* believe,

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are only seeking a means "for allowing licence to their passions"?

On page 162, he says, "He who sees no wonderful future for mental and moral creatures in this vast physical continuance thus represented, may be warned by an ancient fable. A legion of evil beings, expelled from man, entered a herd of swine, and carried them to destruction. One only escaped, made his way to the courtyard of a palace, then sauntered into the stables, kennels, and other like parts, for the sake of filth and offal; filling himself full, as a pig of the most piggish order. The owner said, 'Well, what have you seen? that palace is full of costly furniture, the walls are richly adorned, gold and precious jewels are there.' 'What nonsense!' replied the pig; 'no splendour at all, nothing but filth and offal; that I well know, it was all rummaged; I did not spare my snout.'"

There is a great deal, which is very silly in this fable, as the Prebendary must know. If it be a law of this "best of all possible

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worlds" that a pig can live and grow fat on offal, but must starve and die if fed on refined gold and high-class diamonds, who can blame the pig for seeking the offal? The pig was as true to nature and its "Creator," as is Prebendary Reynolds when he enjoys a first-class anthem at St. Paul's! So where is the room for censure or satire?

Then, who are these pigs of science? Does the Prebendary mean Darwin, Wallace, Huxley, Spencer? They, at any-rate, did not shove their snouts into that ecclesiastical trough which is often full of this world's fatness and of other world offal.

On page 223, he says, "Strange, that in the unbeliever's construction of possibilities, it is not plain that there must be possibilities of which he knows nothing! He *ought* to think that the noble is better than the ignoble, and far more credible. The thoughts going on in other minds, are not less real than those in his own. The shoe may be skilfully made, and

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CHAPTER I

MRS. MORETON was a widow, and lived at Spring Villa, in the parish of Thingford. She kept two servant maids, this number being the irreducible minimum of respectabilty ; and as her only son, Bertie, had just finished at Cambridge, the Moreton family were deemed respectable enough even to attend large or select parties given by the wealthy. Mrs. Moreton's only daughter, Eva, was about two years older than her brother Bertie, and she had just turned twenty-five. She was tall, full of vivacity, with large grey eyes, which sparkled with fun behind their

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very long lashes. At a tennis party or a concert, she was a real acquisition, and not a little sought after in this rural district of Thingford.

The most frequent visitor at Spring Villa was the Rev. John Winson, the curate—always called Parson Jack. Eva Moreton filled his dreams and possessed his heart, but he had never told her so. Parson Jack had been a curate seven years, and though he was nearly thirty-one, yet preferment seemed as far away as ever; so he had to look, and love, and say nothing. He passed days of misery when Bertie brought a college friend to stay a week or two, or Eva was asked to make up the party at some house where he was not invited. The curate was a born athlete, nearly six feet high, of great manly common sense, hating the humbugs of his profession, and, in consequence, not as popular with the ladies as curates with so good an appearance usually are. He had read steadily, on many lines, since he was ten; and though not called brilliant at Oxford,

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he had taken his two "seconds" there, and now modestly thought no more about them. He was a sympathetic, level-headed man, who could sing a good song and enjoy a good dinner.

It was in October, and Bertie Moreton had his friend Tom Tate staying at Spring Villa. Tom Tate had just taken his doctor's degree at Cambridge, and as Bertie and he were like most young fellows who have just taken a degree, they did not know where to look for a corner in which to earn their living. Tom was a fair-haired, blue-eyed, merry youth of twenty-six, with a real turn for science, and almost a genius for any form of outdoor amusement.

He had been to Spring Villa before, and Parson Jack had not slept so well as usual at that time. Wherever Tom went he carried mirth and laughter with him, and Jack feared the effect of Tom's charms on Eva ; consequently, under some pretext or other, the curate was at Spring Villa very often during Tom's visit.

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About the third morning of this visit, the curate called ; and soon Mrs. Moreton said, "Our guest met with an accident yesterday, and injured his knee. It is not serious, but he will have to rest it for many days. How can we amuse him, or rather, how can we help to prevent him from feeling deadly dull, seeing he can't go out?"

"I will come up and play chess with him if you like, or anything else I can do."

"But, Mr. Winson, I am anxious to do something more serious. I fear, from a remark of Tom's the first day he came, that he does not quite believe in the future life. Now would not this be a good opportunity to convince him? What shall I do if he should teach Bertie any of that awful agnosticism?"

"How do you propose to begin then, Mrs. Moreton?"

"I have got a book from the library this morning, called *The World to Come: Immortality a Physical Fact*, by Prebendary J. W. Reynolds. Now, I want

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you to get him to read it at once. It is dedicated to the learned Bishop of London, Dr. Temple, so I should think it is sure to be a good book ; what do you say ? ”

“ Certainly that counts for a good deal. Temple would never let a man dedicate a book to him which was not sound. You may depend he read it through, and crossed all the t’s and dotted all the i’s. But how am I to introduce the book to Mr. Tate ? You see ”—

“ Shall I offer to read it aloud to him ? ” asked Eva.

Parson Jack turned pale. This would never do. Perish all Christian evidence and all science rather than let Eva read aloud to Tom day after day. This would be simply to invite Tom to fall in love with her ; and, of course, if she began by pitying Tom she would end in loving him. That is why deformed men and drunkards always get such good wives—they awaken pity. So, in an instant, said Parson Jack, “ If you will give me the book, I will go and see him.”

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He found Bertie and Tom discussing the morning paper and cigarettes. It seemed rather premature to introduce these gay young men to *The World to Come*, so the curate accepted a cigarette, inquired after the accident, and let them chatter. But fortunately Tom asked Bertie, at last, if they had a circulating library, and if he could get him a good roaring novel. Then Parson Jack, with an innocence born from above, produced his book, and offered to lend it.

Tom said, "But I do not want any stiff scientific reading; I have had enough of that. And what has science got to do with immortality?"

PARSON JACK. "That's the very point. Prebendary Reynolds proves that immortality is a physical fact."

TOM. "Does he? Then I am on his track. What say you, Bert? I am ready to tackle this book, if you fellows will join at it. To-morrow is Sunday; now, I will read through a lot of this, and mark passages for discussion, if the

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parson will come on Monday and preside and help us to discuss it. Are you willing?"

BERTIE. "I am willing. I want to know what science has to say about immortality."

PARSON JACK. "I am willing, for I see it is dedicated to Temple, and it is sure to be the best answer that theology can give to agnosticism."

So when Monday morning came, Parson Jack arrived, and they soon settled to business. Eva joined them, and though all the men thought such subjects were not for girls to discuss, Tom could not say so as he was a guest, and Jack would not, for he always found it a delight to be in her presence.

TOM. "Now, I have read through most of this book and I have marked passages upon which his argument turns. I warn you that he says the same thing over and over, as if that would prove it; and when he has no science to bring to his support, he quotes religious poets—women by preference. But let us make a fair beginning, for he is a cock-

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sure old gentleman. Mark, he calls each chapter a 'research,' so we should look for the scientific method. In the opening words of his 'Advertisement,' he says, 'Physical science, properly so called, is the knowledge of natural phenomena, their antecedents and sequences.' On page 2, line 10, he does not know the difference between induction and deduction, which is not a good start. He opens his first chapter with the profound statement that 'Science is of great use.' On page 7, 'Science is not for the narrowing but enlargement of faith; the more we know the more we believe.' This is another definition of science. Which he will stick to, perhaps we shall find out. He styles his first research, 'Our Life is Rudimentary,' and closes it (page 8), 'Our life is such a vapour, but these thoughts, these emotions of ours, are . . . sure symbols, unerring proofs of a coming life.' I should admit his first chapter is indeed 'rudimentary.' Are you convinced?"

PARSON JACK. "We are not supposed to

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be convinced yet. He has hardly mentioned the future life."

TOM. "He has given you one of his 'unerring proofs.' We have certain thoughts and emotions, which are not always satisfied on earth, therefore there must be another life."

BERTIE. "But this juggling. He must prove to us that it is a fixed law of the universe that every man's thoughts and every woman's feelings are invariably satisfied or realised. Does he do that?"

TOM. "Not yet, but we will examine, and give him fair play. He says, page 14, 'The tokens, in whatever is around him, of a mighty and wise purpose, will not let him think that it is the part of Power and Wisdom to undo His own work by bringing to extinction that which had been made akin to Divine and Infinite Life. The faculties of reason are a delusion and forgery if they are not the signature of immortality.' Will that do?"

BERTIE. "Stop. Has he shown that

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‘Power and Wisdom’ made the world, and are also a Person?”

TOM. “No; he asserts that,”

PARSON JACK. “Has he shown that man is ‘made akin to Divine and Infinite Life’?”

TOM. “No; he asserts that also.”

BERTIE. “It is no use calling this science. A fellow may assert anything.”

TOM. “Do not be impatient. There are treats in store.”

PARSON JACK. “What proof does he give that ‘the faculties of reason are the signature of immortality’? I was always taught, at the theological college, that faith had more to do with immortality than reason. Our spiritual life is not reason; and it is the spirit which gives us the power of becoming immortal, surely.”

TOM. “I do not know. He says reason, and we had better let him state his case in his own way. On page 16, he says, ‘This perpetual progress, this perpetual yearning, are a testimony to immortality that should dispel every fear.’”

PARSON JACK. “Ha, ha, ha!”

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BERTIE. "Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

TOM. "You laugh. But mark, he has given us three proofs of immortality : Our thoughts and our emotions are unerring proofs, page 8 ; the faculties of reason, page 14 ; perpetual progress and perpetual yearning, page 16. These proofs are merely assertions so far, but let Brother Reynolds work it out."

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TOM. "I think we may pass over the next chapter, which he calls 'Research III.,' unless you would like a sample of Brother Reynolds' scientific method. Perhaps Mr. Winson will read the last half of page 25."

PARSON JACK (*reads*). "'Most persons have an *instinctive* sort of sense that the great and good of past ages "are all gone into the world of light"; but it is not in the nature of things that those who seldom think accurately, or to any good purpose, of immortality, shall obtain intellectual conviction of a happy future—

'And yet, as angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted
themes,

And into glory peep.'

HENRY VAUGHAN, *Silex Scintillans*.

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Place yourself in the sunshine; do not look at the sun, but downward; now the sunlight falls on your eyelashes. There is a maze of beautiful colours; the eyelashes, being bent, and crossing one another, cause the mingling. Take a single hair, hold it in front of your eye, an inch or two away, so that the light falling on it is reflected; you will see the prismatic colours in regular little short stripes across the hair. Adam might have seen this in Eden; how few of the many millions have so looked as to see it? The evidences of immortality, and the many proofs of glorious worlds to come, are open to every man who cultivates his higher powers; but when'—

BERTIE. "Chuck the book into the fire, Jack. I thought we were to read science."

Parson Jack puts the book on the floor.

TOM. "This may be called the humour of science. Fancy Adam sitting on a bank and looking at his toes to see the sun reflected through his eyelashes!"

BERTIE. "Or better still, getting Eve to

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hold a hair in front of his eye 'an inch or two away' to see 'the prismatic colours,' and then shouting, By these 'regular little short stripes across the hair' I know that you and I, darling, are immortal!"

PARSON JACK. "Nay, Bertie, he does not say they prove immortality; but it is a feeble and ridiculous passage. I suppose we may stop now. Are you going into the village, Miss Moreton?"

EVA. "Yes; but not yet. I am going to take some food to Mrs. May at 12.30; but I want to hear more of this first. It is so amusing."

TOM. "Well, now, let us leave the eyelashes in the garden of Eden, and come to science. On page 27, he says, 'The degree in which any physical fact or statement can be made manifest to our thought, is the test and proof of physical verity. Physical things are reckoned amongst our greatest certainties because we are able at any time, by repeated experiments, to show their reality.' Do we accept that?"

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"Agreed."

"Agreed."

TOM. "On page 30, 'Thought is not secreted by the brain any more than our ideas of poetry and religion are a product of the small intestines.' This figure is as elegant as it is true, so leave it undisturbed in its loveliness to the credit of Brother Reynolds. Research V., page 35, he styles, 'The Convertibility of Force a Plea for Future Life,' and he begins by this scientific statement—

'No shadow, but its sister light
Not far away must burn!
No weary night, but morning bright
Shall follow in its turn.'

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

It is true that a shadow is cast by light, and that for a long period night has been succeeded by morning; but science quite clearly teaches that the sun will wear out, and there will come a time when night is *not* followed by morning; so that if there is no stronger guarantee that immortal light will follow our dark life, than that morning

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always follows night, I fear that Miss Havergal and Brother Reynolds may find that 'convertibility of force' has not made a good provision for them."

PARSON JACK. "Never mind Miss Havergal; she is pretty good when she is not hysterical. I think this 'convertibility of force a plea for future life' is a good point, and I want to hear what he makes of it. It sounds scientific."

TOM. "Then be good enough to pick up the book and read from the bottom of page 35 to bottom of 36."

PARSON JACK (*reads*). "' Unaided by our senses we should be totally helpless; but by their means we know that the physical world exists; and, gifted also with reason, we discern a truly illimitable prospect of mysteries to be explored, and of good things to be won. There is no standing still for any of us; and little time to assort and consolidate what we know, before fresh materials are brought into our store, and new transformations of force are found. There is in this something delightful. It

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is like a watching for the flowers, as, one by one, their radiant petals open to look upon the sun, and convert its powers into colour, into fragrance, into newness of life. We enlarge our faculties by these physical and mental researches ; we develop a power that makes us strong ; we have, so to speak, a flash, a glow, then an abiding light ; at times we could shout and sing in anticipation of a further coming strength. It is not merely the vividness of sights, the harmonies of sounds, the fragrance of odours, the beauty of colours, that makes us glad : we *know* of some *energy* beyond, which *we transform into a sentiment*. This sentiment is the product of the *tribulations* of many *forces*, concentrating, as for repose, in the flower, and in whatsoever things are lovely, before passing into new formations ; ascending from the physical to the sensuous, to the intellectual, to the emotional. Then follow sacred grades of transformation, and we say : tribulation worketh patience ; patience, experience ; experience, hope ; afterwards hope passes into *confi-*

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dence, or *faith*—because, as with hands, it lays hold of, and sheds abroad the love of God in the heart; and this love passes into a *conviction of immortality*. The convertibility of forces is far more wonderful than most of us realise.’”

TOM. “Now, Mr. Parson Jack, do you call that sound reasoning?”

PARSON JACK. “It is not reasoning at all. He has simply piled metaphor upon metaphor till he has dazed himself. In one line ‘we know of some energy beyond, which *we* transform into a sentiment.’ In the next line this same sentiment ‘is the product of the tribulations of many forces.’ Which is it? Or what does the man want to say? ‘The tribulations of forces!’ What are they? A something which seeks ‘repose in the flower and in whatsoever things are lovely’—rainbows and oil paintings, I suppose. Was ever such a jargon strung together? ‘Tribulation makes patience; patience, experience; experience, hope; hope, faith; faith, love; love, a conviction of immortality!’”

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BERTIE. "It reminds one of the old logical fallacy: The man is on his horse; the horse is on his legs; the legs are on the ground; therefore the man is on the ground.' Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

TOM. "Perhaps it is prebendal logic; it reads rather like a sermon. I beg your pardon, Mr. Winson!"

PARSON JACK. "Never mind me. Let us hear some more of him, and if he can't use reason I will say so as loudly as you can."

TOM. "Well, I want you to help me on the next point. Page 44, speaking of the Jews, he says, 'The universe, all within them, all without them, was of consecrated meaning. The convertibility of Divine Might, Life, Wisdom, was *proved* to them; for Creation was the Eternal's handiwork, a revelation of His attributes. Their sense of incompleteness reposed in the completeness of God; and found, even in the wilderness, a shining way to eternal life.' I know nothing about the Jews; is that true?"

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PARSON JACK. "It is certainly not true. Why, libraries have been written to account for the strange mystery, that in the only Divine revelation in the world nothing was ever said to Moses about a future life. The Jews learnt all about that in the Babylonian captivity. And as for their knowing anything about the convertibility of force, you might as well accuse the angels of taking an interest in politics."

TOM. "I am glad to hear that this is not true, for I began to feel sorry that I had not read more of Jewish writings, if they were so advanced in science.

"Just another point before you go. On page 47, he says, 'Is not the integration and definition of human consciousness in its special character an *infinitesimal transformation of the Infinite Consciousness*? or do you obtain all consciousness from no consciousness—something from nothing?' Now, he lays much stress on this, again and again, for on page 8, he says, 'It is the glory of the sea, that our image reflected in it is a likeness of the Almighty.' This

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can only refer to the body, for the mind would not be reflected in the sea. So that if man is in the likeness of God, partakes of the consciousness of God, and has a body which 'is a likeness of the Almighty,' it is fair and logical to conclude that God's mind is of the same *kind* as man's, and God's body of the same *form* as man's. Do you agree to that?"

PARSON JACK. "Certainly. If man is proved to be Divine in nature and form, the Divine must be human. But he proves too much. A God who has such a mind that he learns Euclid by reason, is not a God ; and a God with two legs and one head is bosh. If God has a mind, of course He has imagination, fear, hope, hatred, love judgment, etc. Now, the Prayer-Book knows better than that, for it says He is 'without body, parts, or passions.' And to talk about reflecting a 'likeness of the Almighty' in the water, is unpardonable burlesque in a 'research' of a scientific kind."

BERTIE. "That grand dilemma of his

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about obtaining consciousness from no consciousness is very old. Socrates used it, only he used 'intelligence' instead of 'consciousness,' and proved to his own satisfaction that man got his intelligence from God who also had intelligence. This heathen argument seems to me to end in making God into a man."

TOM. "There is a huge fallacy under his question. It is not a fair way of stating the problem, 'Do you obtain all consciousness from no consciousness—something from nothing?' In this sense, we daily see living things obtain something from nothing. Take a flower seed, water, soil, and give it sunshine, in time the flower may fill the air with odour. Where did it get the odour from? Not from another odour. There was no odour in the seed or the soil ; there was no colour in them, no flower in them ; so there are three things which the plant has got from nothing—in his sense of the word nothing, viz. that they were not there before. Consciousness may be a function of matter,

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or may result from a certain arrangement of molecules, as reasonably as it may be an entity snipped off from a larger entity and put into a flesh case. We have never allowed sufficiently for the power of arrangement or grouping of molecules. For instance, when we eat beefsteak, we take the *same* elements as form prussic acid, only in a different grouping. Yet there is all the difference of life and death between them; the steak is a food, the acid is deadly poison. So that consciousness, intelligence, life, and motion, may all be due to different arrangements of material atoms.

"I suppose we must stop now, but you will come again to-morrow, Parson, and I will read further. There is more fun to come, I assure you."

PARSON JACK. "If you are going into the village, Miss Moreton, I will wait for you if I may."

EVA. "Certainly; I shall be ready in a few minutes."

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EVA. "It was kind of you to wait ; and I want to ask you about this book. You know my grandfather was a prebendary, and I have been taught to look up to a prebendary as a very great person, but Mr. Reynolds seems to flounder about rather."

PARSON JACK. "Very much, I am afraid. But really a prebendary does not stand for much. It is an empty title, and its main use, I should think, is to keep a man from being mistaken for a curate."

EVA. "Mr. Winson! you are quite bitter. That book does not agree with you."

PARSON JACK. "It does not. It stirs up memories of many difficulties of my own."

EVA. "But why should people have difficulties in religion? Dear papa always said, 'Do your business as business, and reason on things reasonable, but believe your religion and ask no questions.'"

PARSON JACK. "Well, yes, that is the simplest way. But you see we are in for this book, and I fear it will do Tate more

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harm than good, unless we find more science and logic than we have done to-day."

They came to the cottage. Jack held her hand only a quarter of a minute longer than he would have held her grandmother's, but the hopes of a lifetime flashed through those seconds, and he turned to his lodgings thinking more of this present life with Eva than of immortality.

CHAPTER III

ON Tuesday morning the young men met; and again Eva stole in to hear the debate, though her mother was hardly sure that it was "the correct thing to do."

TOM. "Please take the book, Parson; we have a good deal of sport before us. This Research VII. is one upon which nearly everything turns. Its title is, 'The Universe as a Manifestation of Rational Order for Development of Rational Creatures.' On page 49, he says, 'By rational order, as to Nature and her laws, we mean a *perceivable arrangement*, intelligible to all the *faculties* of man's rational nature.' Now, mark, the order is to be 'perceivable,' something we can see clearly; and it is to be 'intelligible to all the faculties.' That which we *feel*, but cannot

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otherwise demonstrate, must be rejected, according to the terms he lays down; so, also, that which is *imagined* only must be rejected. Unless this 'rational order' proves its existence to all my faculties, then I have full absolution from the Prebendary not to accept it. Is that fair?"

PARSON JACK. "Undoubtedly. And he will now have to give us a bit of very clear reasoning, or he is self-doomed."

TOM. "Then please read the marked passages on that same page 49."

PARSON JACK (*reads*). "'Accurate science does not require that we limit ourselves to the material, the concrete; for truly, reason often corrects the fallacies of our physical senses, specially that of colour; so that the faculty of belief, so much scorned by a certain class of men, asserts itself. In all sciences, if discoveries are to be made, reason must first venture in faith.' Lower down, he says, 'There is the exercise of scientific imagination, put forth in scientific faith, and the verification is by

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scientific intelligence.' Great Scot! what a passage!"

BERTIE. "That is fine. Before, he said the 'rational order' must be 'intelligible to all the faculties.' Now, because 'reason corrects the senses,' 'the faculty of belief asserts itself.' He possesses the sweet forgetfulness of a Cabinet Minister."

PARSON JACK. "Yes; but the most amazing thing is, he speaks of the exercise of 'scientific imagination,' as 'scientific faith.' Now he grounds everything on faith. Is faith, then, only imagination?"

TOM. "He says so clearly, but let us follow him. On page 50, he says, 'In the lower creatures were prophecies of ourselves,' and that 'a prophetic eye could have foreseen that man was coming.' Now, as this is one of those clever prophecies *after* the event, I think we may dismiss it, especially as no observations or tendencies in this world of phenomena can possibly serve as a guide to what may happen in a world, not of phenomena but spirit. But let us try him on 'rational order' again."

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PARSON JACK (*reads*, page 51). "The difficulty as to the universe being a manifestation of rational order, arises out of the seeming crush in nature, the little or no care for individuals, apparent failures, the evils of life, the perverseness of man. There is no supreme, dominating, informing influence, which keeps a plant from blight, an animal from disease, a man from the most culpable wickedness and disastrous folly. The promised harvest does not come; the perfection of animal frame, seen in men, in our high-bred horses, and in other animals, is found marred by defect. The beloved and tenderly-nurtured child may bring deadly sorrow to the parents. Vastly more creatures are evil—parasites that live by the pain and destruction of others—than are good and do good. *This is not in agreement with an all-prevailing rational order; seems, indeed, irrational.* There is an all-prevailing rule, we are sure.'"

All the men lay back in their chairs and laughed long and loud.

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BERTIE. "Well done, Brother Reynolds! He gives himself away as readily as a middle-aged bride! He shows that there is no all-prevailing rational order, and then adds, we are sure there is. Now, how does he prove it?"

TOM. "He does some very wonderful things directly. On page 53 he begins his grand inquiry thus, 'Not confounding the effervescence of soda-water with the mental activity of our brain, but'—"

BERTIE. "Ha, ha, ha!"

PARSON JACK. "You are cramming us. Don't make fun of him."

TOM. "Well, read the opening lines of the first paragraph on page 53."

PARSON JACK (*reads*). "'Not confounding the effervescence of soda-water with the mental activity of our brain'"—

ALL. "Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

PARSON JACK. "Do let me finish, 'but discerning distinctions and differences.' Now you have the sublime sentence. It savours of a mixture of Scotch metaphysics

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and whisky. I wish you would not read any more of the beastly thing."

BERTIE. "Tut, man, it is just getting interesting. We'll remember the soda-water; what is the next beverage?"

TOM. "I assure you that is one of the wisest sentences in the book. I have nearly read it through, and it requires very nice 'distinctions and differences' to be sure whether the effusion is 'the effervescence of soda-water' or 'the mental activity' of a prebendary's brain. But continue the passage you began."

PARSON JACK (*reads*). "'Advanced science and metaphysical analysis showing that matter *may be* the concrete of a function of energy, and energy a function of mind or will, *we know* of an actuating cause, a maintaining intelligent influence, of which our own mind is a living miniature.'"

TOM. "Even that gets us no further than '*may be*,' and if we grant that the '*may be*' is true, it tells us nothing. No

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man ever lived to *all* of whose faculties that passage is intelligible. But read again on the same page."

PARSON JACK (*reads*). "'The simple grows complex, the complex is capable of analysis, but the essence of the thing and of its changes is an imparted inner mystery, continually bursting out into new form, new relations, new light. The laws of matter are a prelude to the laws of life, to the symphony of sensation and thought, to the great harmony of man's intellect. Our view of all things amounts to this: the matter of the universe is as a great nerve; space is a breathing-place; time is for manifestation of the temporal forms of the eternal; the sky, that noble canopy above, is like a grand head with brain moving by intelligence; all the philosophy of things is a thought, and all creation is a word of the Almighty.'"

BERTIE. "Well, now, there is plenty of effervescence; is it of soda-water or brain? What a brain!"

EVA. "My dear Bertie, I wish you

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would be sober about all this. I suppose the poor man did his best."

TOM. "When the effervescence is over, let us see what is left. 'The essence of the thing is an imparted inner mystery.' Elsewhere he says we know nothing of the essence of matter. Then how does he know it is '*imparted*'? The sky no more resembles a head with a brain in it, than that passage resembles logical reasoning. He seems to think the sky is a *solid* canopy over us, perhaps he believes in the firmament!"

PARSON JACK. "I see on pages 54 and 55 he explains the irrationality of the universe. First of all, God could not have made man perfect, for that would have turned man into a machine. Secondly, Nature displays a state of things continually becoming and continually passing away. 'Matter is the highly artificial, plastic substance with which mind works and manifests itself.' Matter has no power of its own, as shown by the first law of motion. By energy all work is done, and

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'by this energy Nature has a sort of automatism.'"

TOM. "Well, does that clear it up?"

PARSON JACK. "Not at all. It never touches the difficulty. According to his own rule, it is manifest to all our faculties that there is no 'all-prevailing rational order' in the universe; and this fact he never disputes. As to what would have happened if man had been perfect, or if Nature had not had 'a sort of automatism,' is entirely away from the point. He has not found rational order, and I do not see how he can use a chain the main link of which is broken."

TOM. "I agree with you, but I am glad to notice he does not try to wriggle out of this stupendous difficulty by blaming the devil, or the Fall, or the cussedness of man."

BERTIE. "Well, that is certainly greatly to his credit. Does he then give up his theory about a rational universe?"

PARSON JACK. "Not at all. That is how the man dodges us. He says (page 56)

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there is not a link in the chain of natural causes and effects which is broken ; and adds, 'The embryological and palæontological discoveries of modern times show that there never has been complete biological difference, or severance, between the populations of any two epochs.'"

TOM. "There he gives away his case again, for on page 284, speaking of 'the substantiality' of the future body, he says, 'Immortal, it will be unaffected by any waste, or by lapse of time. . . Our organism will be a definite, permanent, spiritual, essential corporeity, presenting the very highest created likeness to God.' Now, that is a 'complete biological difference.' He says, on page 55, 'Whatever is created never remains—no, not for the fraction of a second—in the same place or condition.' Therefore, unless we have a 'complete biological difference,' the human body, whether spiritual or not, will be subject to decay and waste, and will grow old and perish, as all nature does. But if the body of the future will

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be 'unaffected by any waste or lapse of time,' then it differs from every organism or creature of which we know anything. Therefore, it is not a 'physical fact,' and he pricks his own bubble himself."

PARSON JACK. "I see he admits a great truth on page 57, he says, 'There are displays of thought, and a kind of conscientiousness, in animals which are far off from man.' 'Neither mite nor man is free from law.'"

TOM. "Yes, he boldly states the universe is one, and under one law, but then on the next page he denies it or forgets it. On page 58, 'The weak, the unfit, succumb; their death being a necessary prelude to higher life for *others*, if not for themselves.' This sentence is conclusive against his 'immortality a physical fact.' For if man is ruled by all the laws of this universe, of which he, like all other things, is a part, then how is it that other things die 'as a prelude to higher life for *others*,' but man dies as a prelude to a higher life for *himself*? so that he makes out man goes

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contrary to the life-history of the rest of the universe."

BERTIE. "He seems to have wandered away from the theory of a rational order of the universe. Does he give that up now?"

PARSON JACK. "Not at all. He says, on page 58, 'We kneel reverently to God, and put our ear to nature that we may catch the divine accents of secrets, never loudly proclaimed, always whispered; and we learn at least some letters in that great alphabet of evil, which is so full of mystery.' This seems to me to be chiefly what Bertie calls his soda-water; but he admits that this universe, with all its glory, contains evil, for which he offers no explanation; yet a little lower down, he says, 'The manifestation of rational order in the universe, viewed even in its apparent failings, does away with feebleness and bootlessness. Eternal Power, clothed with that wisdom which natural order proves, and animated with that goodness which beauty and joy proclaim, is working

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by all and every adaptation to a grand result—very noble, very precious.’”

BERTIE. “But he has clearly shown that rational order is *not* found in this world; and he has never answered his own arguments by which he clearly established that many things we see are irrational, Do tell me what you make of it, Jack? Has he got what we used to call at Cambridge a parson-mind?”

PARSON JACK. “It seems so. Of course every profession looks at life from its own standpoint, and our profession is so largely blinded with superstitions and emotions that I can well understand a man’s reason suffers sooner or later, and that may produce a parson-mind. This man is certainly diseased somewhere. He puts up the shutters before an empty window, and then brags that he has plenty of stock inside.”

CHAPTER IV

TOM. "Well, what are we to do? Here is a man ready to put the world right, or act as showman to the universe, with a live bishop to collect the pence at the door, yet there is no reliance to be placed upon a single term or definition which he invents or employs. If we grasp one page, he slips away, like an eel, into the mud of metaphor on the next page. He begins Research VIII. with a sensible statement from Dr. Westcott, the Bishop of Durham. 'Theology deals with the origin and destiny of things; science with things as they are according to human observation of them.' Now, how could he quote that passage, and then proceed to establish immortality by an appeal to science?"

PARSON JACK. "I cannot defend him, I

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wish I could. Immortality is a glorious vision! But it is not one of the things which has been brought under 'human observation,' and therefore, according to Dr. Westcott, science has nothing to do with it."

TOM. "I think in this 'research' you will find he has completely turned his back upon science; read two or three of the marked passages."

PARSON JACK (*reads*, page 60). "'The insect and the song-bird, the roar of thunder, the rush of cataract, the murmur of the ocean, are the earth's orchestral service in the cathedral of the universe.' Page 61, 'We are not the creatures of a moment, but an epitome of the universal, of the Infinite Life, of the glorious Eternal.' Page 62, 'Our spirits, in serene meditation, find a grandeur very plain to thought—simple, calm, free. Life merits all our care. Besides sparkles of grace, angels' ministry, with glimpses of the spirit—the seen being ever and always the unseen made manifest—the best and greatest is

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this : the instinct and love of truth, however marred, in every one of us, is the promise of that future, whither all things tend ; is the gleam of that perfect truth, so near to all, yet, at present, by few possessed.' ”

TOM. “ I see very little of science, and no promise of immortality, in these passages. I do not know what the ‘ *instinct of truth* ’ may be ; it is certainly not anything found in man. You might as well look for truth in the marriage service as in the majority of men. If this is given as a proof of immortality, we are indeed in a bad plight. Will you give us another passage ? ”

PARSON JACK (*reads*, page 63). “ ‘ There are harbingers everywhere, and in all things, of golden possibilities. As we draw secrets from granite substances, so in the wrinkled old man flourish flowers of hope that the old self may become a better self. The earth seems not to grip him. Mortality’s deep yearning, to fulfil some Will imperishable, has grown incorporate with his life.

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Even the dead abide with us, their invisible hands still hold our thoughts and affections. That shows there are in death vibrations infinite of life.'"

BERTIE. "But where is he now? Is this the soda-water gone flat? What proofs can the hope of an old man offer any truer than the hopes of childhood—and we all know they were false? and what sort of hands must the dead have, if they hold our thoughts and affections?"

PARSON JACK. "But the amazing thing is, that a bad figure of speech about hands of the dead should be taken to prove that death has infinite vibrations of life. It is really very depressing, when one expected something so different."

TOM. "He has entirely forgotten his own conditions of the preceding chapter, and the definition of the sphere of science by Dr. Westcott. On page 67, 'The man of faith sees things he never observed before.' Here he uses the word 'sees' for feels, and forgets it is the first law of 'the unseen'

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that a man always sees or feels what he believes, because no proof can be brought to correct his emotions or his visions. He is rather tiresome, but I hope you will come to-morrow."

CHAPTER V

ON Wednesday morning the same four met again to look into this most interesting of all questions.

TOM. "I think we may do two chapters in a short time this morning, for they are both apart from science. He styles Research IX., 'On the Power to go Beyond Ourselves.' It seems rather like metaphysics. Will you read from the beginning?"

PARSON JACK (*reads*). "'It seems a truism "that like things in the like circumstances will act alike"; but if this, which seems so true, were altogether true, the worlds would never have become what they are. The present condition of the earth is proof that like, in like circumstances, produced the unlike. In very ancient ages there was no life in the earth, and the dead

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became living ; the living had no instinct, and instinct was added ; afterwards, to instinct was given intelligence, and to intelligence, emotion. Things were advanced beyond themselves. The departure from uniformity was by a sort of free operation.' ”

TOM. “ This is rather provoking, don't you think ? If ‘ like things in like circumstances do not act alike,’ there is an end of his truism ; but he never stops to inquire if like things can be in like circumstances, in any numbers, and for any length of time ; and, from the view of evolution, this is a most important item. Conditions or circumstances change so rapidly, and in such varying degrees, that no man could prove that the circumstances had been absolutely alike for any given period ; so that when he says ‘ the present condition of the earth is proof that like, in like circumstances, produced the unlike,’ he makes a statement which is quite unscientific, because it admits of no proof whatever.”

BERTIE. “ That is undoubtedly so. He is most dreadfully inaccurate. He says

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‘the dead became living.’ ‘Became’ is probably the word which exactly describes the process ; but elsewhere he speaks of life as imparted to matter, from without. Now, why should not life be a function of matter, produced by a certain arrangement of atoms ? just as you showed us, Tom, that poison, odour, colour, and most likely consciousness itself, result from molecular arrangement. They none of them existed in the molecules before the arrangement took place, and they none of them were in the molecules when the arrangement had been broken up. Life appears to obey this same law. When one thinks of it, we know nothing of any life apart from matter.”

TOM. “ I see no objection to that. He says ‘instinct was added.’ Now, if animals ever acquired anything by slow degrees, most probably they acquired instinct. Instinct seems to be the molecular record of habits, extending through millions of generations, before reason was acquired. In the same way he is probably wrong

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in saying that intelligence came before emotion. But what in the world does he mean by saying 'the departure from uniformity was by a sort of free operation'?

PARSON JACK. "I give that up. 'A sort of free operation' is sufficiently vague to include even the vagaries of a metaphysician. But I see he continues this point; he says, 'Was this sort of free operation by automatic action? We are told that the universe, and all in it, plants, lower animals, higher animals, and men, are mere machines; and that our thought, will, emotion, are produced by unconscious physico-chemical energies . . . still men and things did, in time past, go beyond themselves, for things became other things unlike themselves; plants, animals, men, changed and changed again; and into men came a harmony which had no pre-existence. There was a surpassing process—

'Sleepe after toyle,
Porte after stormie seas,
Ease after warre,
Death after life,
Doth greatly please.'"

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TOM. "I see, he is afraid of automatic action. Now, automatic action, strictly speaking, is found only where an inventor has made a machine to obey certain laws of arrangement, without any further interference on the part of the inventor. Now, if anybody ought to believe in an automatic universe, it is Prebendary Reynolds; for he is afraid of nature, and believes in somebody outside of nature coming to dead matter and adding life; then another morning he walks round and adds instinct; and then later, driving round this huge machine on a cloud, he thinks intelligence would do them good, and takes out a phial and adds a little intelligence, and thus he keeps oiling the new machine. That view of the world is as silly as praying for rain."

PARSON JACK. "But do you not see that in this passage the Prebendary has come round to your view about consciousness? He says, 'Into men came a harmony which had no pre-existence.' There, now! 'No pre-existence.' A something, which existed nowhere in the world or its Creator, came

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into men. I am astounded that he should say that, after all his talk to the contrary. If one thing can arise thus, why not twenty? Why not intelligence, consciousness, life itself?"

BERTIE. "His chief point, we must remember, is to prove that man has gone beyond himself; instead of that, he has only shown that man is capable of development, and has developed. A child develops out of his childhood, but it would not be fair to say that he goes beyond himself. There is no such thing as a 'surpassing process.' Is there, Tom?"

TOM. "I never heard of it. He has a genius for demonstrating the obvious, and for bringing forward facts which have no connection with the point at issue. What possible point does he make by quoting 'Faerie Queene' in this connection? Sleep after toil pleases us, so does a port after storms, and ease after war. All these statements are true; but they have no more to do with 'going beyond ourselves,' or immortality, than party government has to do with the welfare of the people."

CHAPTER VI

PARSON JACK. "I suppose we may omit this chapter now, and the next also?"

TOM. "I have marked some passages which you can hear in a few minutes. On page 71, he says, 'The atoms and molecules are wonderful little machines, they minister to life, or take away, but know not, nor are glad.' On page 72, he says, 'They observe in undiscerning elements something that is discerning.' Apparently, therefore, there is some spirit or intelligence in these machines! On page 269, he says, 'The whole is because the Infinite, in infinitude, the Eternal, in eternity, occupies all space, all time, all substances, as the Creator, the Sustainer, the Ruler.' I can make nothing of these

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three statements, when I try to reduce them to one. Can you?"

PARSON JACK. "No ; the poor man is not accurate in his thoughts. I think the explanation is, he trusts his sentiments rather than his thoughts. But on page 75, he says, 'Whether in continuance or change, no place and no condition is apart from law. There is little doubt but that other universes preceded our own, and that others will follow ; but everywhere and always everything was reasonable, no annihilation anywhere ; conservation became transformation, and old things were renewed, by operation of one and the same eternal energy, to enter new shapes and occupy new places.' If he would stick to it that in any change there is no place and no condition apart from law, we should find light on many things. Not only must evil and misery and death, but the will of man also, be under the sway of that same law."

TOM. "Just so ; but he will not believe his own statements, on any one point.

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All that he says about preceding and succeeding universes is quite true, but that goes to prove that present men succeeded former men, and that other men will succeed us. This, however, is not what he wants to establish. He wishes to prove that man's life is guided by laws existing nowhere else in the universe; that all the atoms and molecules which build up a man will not go to build up other men in *this* world (which is what happens to every other animal), but that they will build up the *same* man in *another* world. Thus he wishes to introduce man into a place and condition which is 'apart from law.' And so, once again, he contradicts his own plain statement. Fancy any intelligent man calling this science (page 77), 'Our highest faculties, all of them collectively and every one singly, find comfort and *assurance* in the poet's words—

' I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm as it was bright.' "

Loud laughter broke up the conference.

CHAPTER VII

AS the curate rose to leave, Eva said, "Mother wishes to see you, Mr. Winson, before you go," and she led the way to the drawing-room.

Mrs. Moreton was sad, and after the usual short, meaningless salutations, she began, "Mr. Winson, I am quite miserable about this shocking death."

"Whose death, Mrs. Moreton?"

"Have you not heard? Why, dear Eliza, who was our cook for two years. Don't you remember, you married her last Christmas to that beast of a drayman, Jim Watson? After thirty-six hours of horrible suffering, she died almost the moment the baby was born. She died last night, and Jim was so drunk he

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wanted to take the baby round to all the neighbours ; and he was drunk again this morning before nine o'clock. There he is, a great lumping brute, caring for neither God nor man, and he can live ; but my little, pale, meek Eliza must die. It seems so cruel, Mr. Winson."

" It is cruel—hideously cruel."

" Do not think for a moment that I murmur against God's goodness, but I really wonder why God makes such men as Jim. They are not men, but brutes—sheer brutes."

" Perhaps God does not make them."

" What do you mean, Mr. Winson ?"

" Perhaps *we* make them."

" How ? I do not understand you."

" Well, these men are born very much like other men. We deprive them of any ennobling surroundings, of most things which we call education, and of any real interest in either Church or State ; and then, when we have left them to become well-developed brutes, we wish to put the blame on somebody else."

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"Then you do not think God makes these brutish men?"

"In a sense, I don't. To speak more correctly, I think God makes them as much as He makes princes, but society mars them."

"Are you a socialist, Mr. Winson? for if you are, we need not talk any more. I suppose you think Jim is far more deserving of pity than the poor young thing who lies dead in the house?"

"Mrs. Moreton, the dead need no pity. Had you asked me yesterday, I should have said that Eliza needed a hundred times more pity than Jim."

"Well, I am glad to hear that. Do you think her soul is safe? She was such a quiet girl I never could quite make out what she thought of religion. I fear she has hardly been to church since she was married. But surely, dying in such circumstances, God would not judge the poor thing very severely? Do you think He would?"

"Certainly not."

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“ Mr. Winson, what is the matter? You give me no comfort. You will be as bad as Tom Tate soon. How has the reading gone this morning? ”

“ Not very well. You see, the Prebendary undertook to do the impossible when he tried to prove ‘immortality a physical fact.’ It is not physical at all.”

“ What do you mean, Mr. Winson? the body rises, is not that physical? Our soul lives with God in heaven till it comes to take its body again, does it not? ”

“ I do not know.”

“ For shame! To think that you are unable to show a youth like Tom the error of his ways. Eva is quite distressed about it all, and I intend to keep her away. It is wicked to talk about the future life as you would about stars or fossils. I think you will find the Prebendary right after all. He would not have been made a prebendary if he were not right. Do, I entreat you, stir yourself, and lead that youth to the truth! You are still

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silent, I cannot understand you, Mr. Winson."

"Mrs. Moreton, I should feel very irreverent if I could speak of a mystery like the future life in glib, ready-made phrases. It is, at anyrate, too solemn for that."

"Don't frighten me. You had better go. I can think of dear Eliza as an angel in heaven now. Good-bye."

CHAPTER VIII

ON Thursday morning Jack Winson received a great shock. He found on his breakfast-table a letter from his bishop offering him "the living" of Telby. It was a small village, with many acres and few people, but, though the value of the living had fallen till it was little more than one hundred pounds per annum, yet there was a comfortable vicarage, with large garden and stables.

Jack sent a note to Bertie Moreton, saying he was called away, and that he would not be able to attend another discussion till Saturday morning.

He arrived at Telby in the afternoon, and looked over the house, schools, and church; he saw the old sexton, and inquired about the usages and congregations.

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He found the usual state of church death in the country. The population was three hundred, the church could hold one hundred and twenty, but twenty adults was a "fair congregation." The late vicar had been there twenty-five years, and he was an old man when he went. Many things had been neglected; and though the church expenses had been reduced as low as possible, yet the parish could not raise the amount. There, as elsewhere, the day labourer had not the slightest interest in church doctrine or the mansions of the blest.

Naked truth is seldom attractive. The parish life and prospects at Telby were no exception to the rule. It could hardly be called a rich reward for eight years of hard work at school and college, and for eight years' waiting and drudging as curate.

But as he sat a few minutes in the little quaint church, he thought of Eva Moreton. If she would come and share the vicarage with him, then all that black mass of ignorance and jealousy, of slavery and

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want, which forms the village life of England, would fade away into the beauty of a dream.

Late that evening he arrived at his home, and talked over the whole matter with his parents. His father, as a successful business man, could not understand why Jack should be willing to give up one hundred and twenty pounds per annum as curate, to take a hundred pounds per annum as vicar with increased responsibilities.

But his father had never been a curate.

To Jack it was most delightful to go home and discuss his new plans, and for the first time he told them of his love for Eva. As they had never seen her, their criticisms and suggestions could only be of a general kind. They loved their son too much to offer anything like opposition. The father, knowing well the sacrifices which had given Jack his education, was in his heart a little disappointed that his son's wife should not be wealthy; but the ways of parsons were often mysterious to

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him, and he did not name his disappointment.

After a happy visit, Jack returned to his lodgings at Thingford, feeling years younger, and full of those bright visions with which hope and love can people even this gray world.

CHAPTER IX

ON Saturday morning Jack woke early, and joy banished sleep. A feeling of dawning freedom filled his heart. For eight years he had been a sort of respectable slave; his creeds had been settled for him by men who had torn each other asunder with the vehemence of a committee for working a church society; the style of his conversation, the cut and colour of his clothes, the pursuits seemly for a curate, had all been settled for him with the narrowness and the vigour which is usually found in the rules of a girls' school; his first business had been to play the shadow of his ecclesiastical superior, unless he wished to divide the parish and blast his prospects. Now, he thought, much of this at least was nearly over;

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he was about to pass from that dreadful condition, often bordering upon flunkeyism, into the liberty and responsibility of manhood. This was joy enough for one heart and one day. But there were far lovelier visions, for now he could tell Eva Moreton of the love with which he worshipped her. He had seen younger men of all ranks revel in the delight of early manhood, win their brides, and take their place among their fellowmen, whilst the curate was permitted to fill up the marriage registers, or sit silent at the wedding-breakfast; but now his time had come to pluck life's ripe fruit. His unspoken love had so filled him that he felt sure Eva must know something of it, and if she favoured his deep affection, then he would forget all the bitterness of past years, and drown their memories in delight. He thought that Mrs. Moreton would be favourable; they had always been friends, though she had sometimes exercised her privilege as a middle-aged woman, a mother, and a widow, to scold him "for his good." He longed for the

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discussion to be over, and then he would see Mrs. Moreton and boldly tell her all.

So at ten he arrived at Spring Villa. Tom was much better. Eva did not join them, but such a tide of hope rolled through the curate's life, that her temporary absence did not fill him with gloom, as it had often done before.

TOM. "I have finished the book, but I do not wish you to take my verdict on it, so let us wade through more chapters. Research XI. is entitled, 'How we know of the Supernatural,'—know it by science remember, for we are examining a 'physical fact,'—will you read the opening page?"

PARSON JACK (*reads*). "'A spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof' (Job iv. 15, 16).

'From God,
Down to the lowest spirit ministrant,
Intelligence exists which casts our mind
Into immeasurable shade.'

ROBERT BROWNING, *Paracelsus*.

There is a well-known tendency in

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nature by which all visible things are brought from a state of invisibility, and are made to pass into it again. The energy, so ruling nature, is not a part of it in the sense that a part is less than the whole. It is more : it makes the whole, is that by which nature is, and by which visible nature passes away. It is an over-nature, a supernature, the supernatural which makes nature.

“ ‘ This supernatural is, we think, that permanent, whatever it may be, which gives the appearance of abidingness, and of uniformity ; though in reality, there is no fixity anywhere ; but change and passing away everywhere, not less surely than moment succeeds moment. We, ourselves, have a power to change things in their form by directing force to act upon them and their collocation ; but that which these things represent we cannot change, that which nature tells of is unchangeable. All matter, and every sort of force whatsoever we feel, or see, or hear, or taste, or smell, we can change. By this

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we know that matter and force are not the Essence, are not the Cause of nature ; but a clothing, a representation of Something that is more than matter and force.' ”

TOM. “ Now, I do not want to shock you, Mr. Parson, but there is a very humorous side to his quotation from the book of Job. When we remember that this is a scientific inquiry, and that the question is ‘*how* we know the supernatural,’ it is a remarkable answer, ‘a spirit passed before my face, and the hair of my flesh stood up.’ It seems rather funny to prove the existence of the supernatural by feeling a ‘goose-coat’ all over my body.”

PARSON JACK. “It is still more wonderful for any clergyman to try and prove the supernatural from the Book of Job, which is now universally admitted by theologians to be an ancient drama. If he quoted the whole book we should be no nearer a single proof either of science or revelation. It is a grand old drama, and we have read much of our later faiths into it, sometimes at the expense of accuracy. When I have

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to take a funeral, and read, 'I know that my *Redeemer* liveth, and that He shall stand *at the latter day* upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet *in my flesh* shall I see God,' I often wonder what the old dramatist would think, if he could know the comfort which foreign races have derived from a wrong translation of one of his dreams. Job¹ said, 'I know that my *avenger* liveth, and that He shall stand up *at the last* upon the earth: and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet, *without my flesh*, shall I see God.' How we have converted and modernised those old Jewish Scriptures! Besides, if it is a revelation, as he probably holds it to be, then it is no longer a branch of physical science; and so has nothing whatever to do with the method of our inquiry."

BERTIE. "Yes, that is wonderful; but to crown all, after saying a spirit passed before his face, and he was afflicted with 'goose-coat,' he adds, he 'could *not* discern

¹ See chap. xix., vers. 25, 26, *Revised Version*.

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the form thereof.' The net result of this thrilling experience is a sheer negation. He could not discern the form, but he does not tell us what he did discern."

TOM. "Then he quotes Browning. Now, I believe the first essential to become a Browningite is to be unable to see the meaning of Browning. I fear I am becoming a Browningite. The quotation seems to say that the intelligence of any spirit casts our mind into shade. But we do not know anything of spirits by science, and we do not suppose that the mind of man is the same as the spirit of man. He refers to two *unlike* things, and he might far more appropriately have said the heat of the sun far exceeds that of an iceberg."

PARSON JACK. "Exactly so. But he seems to think spirit is intelligence. I wonder if he thinks men learn Greek or engineering by their spirits or by their brains?"

TOM. "His quotations are usually unfortunate, but look at his reasoning (?) here.

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He says, there is a tendency for ALL visible things to come from a state of invisibility, and then to pass into invisibility; therefore, there is one and the same law for grass and men ; but the whole purpose of his book is to show that man is *not* under the same law as grass, and does not disappear, once for all, into the invisible. But he surpasses himself, as the prince of confusion, in this passage. He says, 'Energy' is 'an overnature, the supernatural *which makes nature.*' Further on, he says, 'every sort of force' we can change, by this we know that force is *not the cause of Nature.* Put it into a syllogism—

Whatever we can change is not the
cause of Nature ;

We can change every sort of force :

Therefore, No sort of force is the
cause of Nature.

But he says energy is the supernatural—

Therefore, the supernatural is not the
cause of Nature !

Here, again, he proves the contrary of the

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thing he most constantly affirms in the book. Again, he says there is no fixity anywhere, but 'the supernatural is that permanent whatever it may be.' Now, we have seen on page 284 he says, in reference to the future body, 'our organism will be a definite permanent corporeity'; then our organism will be the supernatural."

PARSON JACK. "He certainly is original in his logic. He seems to have collected his facts as men put bits of glass into a kaleidoscope, and every time he shakes the instrument, he gives us a new pattern:"

TOM. "On page 84, he proves too much. Will you read?"

PARSON (*reads*). "'This capability of changing into something else, is by that co-operation of nature with the supernature, which is as a response in music by the instrument to the hand and mind of man.'"

TOM. "This seems to me to land him into terrible blasphemy. He has been

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enumerating changes by laws of growth, and he says these are by the co-operation of nature with the supernatural, just as an instrument responds to the performer. Now, clearly the performer and not the instrument is responsible for the quality and kinds of the music. Now, if all these changes of plants, animals, and man, are responses to the supernatural, then verily all the blunders, failures, misery, brutality, and cruelty, are likewise responses to the supernatural. For remember, in his chapter on the 'rational order of the universe'—though he found there was *not* rational order—he never accused the devil, or the Fall, or man, of breaking that order. So we are left face to face with the supernatural and nature. They are answerable for everything produced. I say he proves too much. If his statements are true, the supernatural causes idiots, Russian officials, and the Sultan of Turkey. On page 86, he says, we 'build up strong assurance, that to the guilty are "purposes of wrath."' But the most atrociously guilty are only

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responses to the supernatural. Do tell me, is this theology?"

PARSON JACK. "It seems like it. Many theologians hold this in some form. I have heard that even Canon Liddon did not believe a man was the father of his own child."

TOM. "What do you mean?"

PARSON JACK. "Well, you see, they believe the soul is a divine entity in a body, and cannot, therefore, come into the world by the ordinary laws of reproduction. So they hold that God gives each body a new soul—yet these very people believe in 'the Fall of man,' and that we are all born in sin in consequence of 'the Fall.' Now, if a man is only the father of his child's body, and not of his soul, where does the sin come from in each individual? because sin is not in the body, apart from the soul. Clearly, if God gives a fresh soul to each child, He gives the sin with it, which is an absurd supposition."

TOM. "You amaze me! And that is theology, is it? Well, now I begin to understand why it was that the men at

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Cambridge, who took Orders, were always infected, more or less, with a disease which will some day be catalogued in medical works as the atrophy of reason. I thank you for that case. It helps me to see why this prebendary manufactures fog as naturally as aristocrats manufacture the poor. On page 94, he says, 'The waves of light, the action of gravity, the energies or movements of magnetism and electricity . . . make weak things to be strong, *dead things to live.*' Here he gives an account of the origin of life which is altogether without the intervention of the supernatural. Probably most scientific men would agree with this. Yet he has denied it again and again before."

PARSON JACK. "He denies it on the next page (95). He says, 'That sense of solidity which we have concerning nature; the glance we obtain of all-pervading law, which gives to every change the beauty of a transfiguration: is by that running of the Supernatural into the Natural, which defines science.'"

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BERTIE. "We might as well try to weigh an earthquake, as to read any two pages of this book and make them fit. Have we not nearly had enough to-day?"

TOM. "Nearly. But mark a strange statement in this passage, 'all-pervading law gives to every change the beauty of a transfiguration.' Now, in face of the atrocious and abounding cruelty caused by this 'all-pervading law,' how dare he insult his readers by saying it gives 'the beauty of a transfiguration'? Great God! Let him come for one day with a doctor into the slums of London,—or, for that matter, into the first cottage here,—and if he can say of every change in the development of life that it has the beauty of a transfiguration, he must be raving mad. Take the inevitable in man's life, viz. his birth. Can anything more demoniacally cruel be imagined than the change which we call birth? If heaven were full of recording angels, they could never register the brutality, the cruelty, the agony, which fills the earth every moment from this one cause

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alone. I suppose the cruellest of human beings have been kings and priests, and the cruellest of organisations is a Government ; but I do not believe a Government composed of kings and priests would have rained such a horror of brutal cruelty on the earth as this one beautiful, transfiguring, all-pervading law. His bosh is bad enough, but his blasphemy is unbearable !”

PARSON JACK. “Hear him on page 96, and forget your anger. ‘Not only does the unseen become fashioned into shape ; the spiritual forms a physical model of itself, and thus the Supernatural causes the things of Nature to present an alphabet of language, which intelligence reads, concerning more wonderful and higher realities.’”

BERTIE. “What a pity the man had not a bell to jingle, and cry Soda-water ! A man who can say that ‘the spiritual forms a physical model of itself,’ does not understand what he means by spiritual or physical.”

TOM. “On page 102, he says, ‘Jangling will be done away with, when we

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recognise Nature as the *chief* organ of Divine revelation.' This is just what the man of science wishes to do, but prebendaries and such like will never do it, they prefer 'jangling,' because they want to make the Book of Job, or the Psalms, a higher revelation than 'the chief organ of Divine revelation.'"

PARSON JACK. "I confess I am amazed at this statement. No bishop would ordain a man who said that Nature is 'the chief organ of Divine revelation.'"

TOM. "What an old heretic he must be! On page 104, he says, 'The world is not His image, nor His dress, nor His light, nor His word—it is that which He made from *nothing*; and apart from Him is nothing. The revealing power and manifold truths of nature, as touched with hues of heaven, are a comfort to us all. Felicia Dorothea Hemans wrote, in time of sickness—

'Thou didst rear me for Thine own,
With Thy sweet singing-birds and mountain brooks,
Feeding my thoughts in primrose-haunted nooks,
With fairy phantasies and wood-dreams lone.' etc.

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Now, on page 58, he says, 'everything is seen by the eye of science to weave a living garment for God.' Here he says 'the world is not His dress.' What is the difference between dress and a garment in the wardrobe of a prebendary? Then he says He made the world 'from *nothing*.' What teaches him that, science or 'revelation'?"

PARSON JACK. "I can answer for him that revelation nowhere says anything of the kind. No wonder he quotes Mrs. Felicia Hemans in time of sickness."

BERTIE. "Judging from the poetry, I should say her sickness must have been severe. Perhaps Mrs. Hemans told him the world was made from nothing."

TOM. "On page 107 he calls his 'research' the 'Naturalness of the Supernatural,' and quotes 'the World is the Workshop of the Rational and the Good'—a self-condemning phrase of Strauss'. 'The Natural is all that of which our physical senses obtain, or can obtain, any experience.' This is one of his finest jumbles. Strauss' phrase

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is not so self-condemning as this chapter's title. Unless the supernatural is distinct from the natural, it is a fraud to use the term ; and if it is distinct, it is a feeble juggle to talk about the 'naturalness of the supernatural.' It would be just as scientific and true to talk about the blackness of white, or the Christianity of popery ! All through the book his one horror has been that there are certain sensual unbelievers who say that the world around us is the product of natural forces ! Further, if the natural is only 'all that our physical senses obtain,' then immortality is not natural, for our physical senses obtain no experience or knowledge of this ; and so immortality is not a physical fact, and the title of the book is a bit of prebendal humbug."

PARSON JACK. "He certainly gives himself away there."

TOM. "But listen to this on page 109, 'The *supernatural* everywhere, as revealed in nature, falls within the domain of science. . . . It is that great *precipitate*, or concrete, by which, as with an alphabet of physical

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laws of things and persons, mind and spirit are able to rise higher in the scale of creation.' Now, at last, we know what the supernatural is. It is 'that great precipitate by which mind and spirit rise higher.' What may Deity come to next? A precipitate! Well, well!"

BERTIE. "Now we have 'mind and spirit,' before it was always spirit which was the intelligent part. I confess I do not quite see how spirit is to rise higher by means of a 'great precipitate, or concrete.'"

PARSON JACK. "Neither do I."

TOM. "On page 110, he says, 'We turn aside from hypotheses which are not logical; we base all our reasoning on *real knowledge*. By the coming down of some living *form* and power into this dead world were inorganic atoms made organic.' He no longer shelters himself by saying that some supernatural energy caused life, but a *living form* came down into the world; and yet on page 109, he says, 'Once there was no life in our earth, and we do *not*

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accurately know in what manner it began,' but he knows it was (1) living, (2) a form, and (3) it came from somewhere above. I suppose in theological language this passes for *real knowledge*? On page 112 he is very angry with men who are only restrained from vice 'by selfish considerations.' Of course to avoid a vice because he wants to be happy in heaven is not a selfish consideration."

BERTIE. "All religion, as popularly understood, seems to me to be based on the lowest elements of utter selfishness."

TOM. "He continues that these vicious, selfish men are 'utterly ignorant that their soul is as a chamber with elastic walls, which, when God is therein, expands infinitely, but without God *the space* shrinks and shrivels.' I like the idea of the 'elastic walls,' and soul being a 'space.' Fancy an entity being a 'space'! What does the man believe?"

"I can stand this no longer," said Parson Jack impatiently.

CHAPTER X

PARSON JACK was glad to escape from the discussion, for he had found it most difficult to give his attention to it ; and really he was sorry that Mrs. Moreton had introduced the book to his notice, and, as it were, forced it upon Tom.

Jack had read enough to know that the science of the natural physical world and the visions of a supernatural and spiritual life have no connection with each other, and can have no connection, because they are not on any common basis ; they lie on two different planes, and do not admit of any common demonstration or experience. Religion and science have ever waged war, and for ever must, until one of them is finally driven from the field of human life. Again and again has religion been driven

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from some point of vantage, and again and again has she moved a few steps round the corner, and vaunted, Now I am upon the impregnable rock of absolute truth, till some new scientific discovery has dislodged her from her castle of sand. This eternal retreat is the history of known truth. But Jack had the emotion and imagination necessary to make a religious man, and they had both been captured by early training, so that, unless in a free discussion, he was quite willing to let the difficulties of science slide.

On leaving, Jack asked to see Mrs. Moreton. He was flushed with excitement as he entered the drawing-room. He did not find Mrs. Moreton, but Eva, busy adding up the marks of her Sunday-school class, in an easy-chair by the fire.

It was a scene to add ardour to a lover. The tall, beautiful girl sat in a plain morning gown, which revealed a figure that needed no adornment ; and, as she rose to greet him, her clear, frank eyes, and her cheeks tinged with a faint additional

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flush, said plainly, I welcome you. To touch her hand was an inspiration to heroic deeds, and to hear her voice was music, at least to Jack.

For a moment he was slightly confused. He had entered the room so full of the disclosure he intended to make to Mrs. Moreton, that he had never considered what he should say if he met Eva instead. After their salutations, he sat down by the small table on which she had placed her book, and asked, "Is your mother at home, Miss Moreton?"

"No; she has gone into the village. She is dreadfully upset about poor Eliza's death; and she may have gone to the vicarage, but I expect her soon. Can you wait? or can I give her any message from you?"

Jack felt the fascination of her natural frankness and ease, and was silent for a few seconds, wondering whether he should tell her first. All nature said yes; but he was just a little afraid lest he should create difficulties if he did not respect the rather

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old-fashioned notions of Mrs. Moreton, who always asserted to the full the authority of mother and father since she had overcome the first pangs of widowhood.

As he did not reply instantly, Eva said, "Your discussion has not been so long to-day. I did not come, because mother seems disappointed at the result, so far as she has heard of it. Do you think any good comes of this sort of discussion?"

"None whatever. People can only assimilate what their prejudice will eat; so every man in any argument remains just where he was before."

"It was very kind of you to take the book to Tom, merely to please mother."

"I am only sorry that so little has come of it. I am afraid it seems dreadfully ridiculous to Tom."

"Do you think the book is as muddled as Tom and Bertie say it is?"

"Yes; for it seems impossible to exaggerate its confusion. The writer appears to have made every mistake a man could make."

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"I am really sorry, for mother is dreadfully distressed at the way in which Tom and Bertie revile it."

Again there was a pause, but Mrs. Moreton did not come. So Eva said, "You seem rather alarmed. I did not mean to trouble you about it, and you certainly are in no way to blame."

"I was not thinking of that. I have another difficulty, and I want your advice, Miss Moreton, please. I have been offered the living of Telby, and I can't make up my mind whether to accept it or not."

Eva grew pale, but she said quite calmly, "Of course you will accept it. The bishop ought to have given you one long ago. But we shall be awfully sorry to lose you. I cannot say how sorry."

"But I am not sure I shall accept it ; as I told you, I want advice."

"Do you mean it is not good enough? What is it worth?"

"It is not worth much—just one hundred a year quite clear ; but there is a very charming vicarage, a cosy old place with

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rather low rooms, and the drawing-room has a French window opening on to the lawn, beyond which stretch miles of well-timbered fields. It might be made quite lovely. You see I have some pocket-money of my own, which is likely to increase considerably some day, whenever old Uncle George dies."

"What is the difficulty, then? Do your father and mother object?"

"No; I saw them yesterday, and they approve; but the decision must rest with you."

"Why with me? Of course you must take it; though, I tell you, it will be a dreadful blow to us to lose you."

Then she saw what he meant, and she blushed into positive loveliness.

Jack continued. "It rests with you, because I cannot leave you. For years have I waited to have something to offer you besides mere protestations of undying affection. I think you must have known for years that I have loved you, and if you can love me well enough to come and

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share the vicarage, I shall find Telby a paradise. Can you, Miss Moreton?"

Her lips trembled with emotion, and her bright eyes glistened with tears, as she looked at him for answer, and he continued—

"It is not much to offer you, I know. It will be frightfully humdrum, and you deserve"—

In radiant loveliness she leaned across the table and interrupted him. "Please do not talk about that. I shall not marry Telby, but you. I am sure you must have found out long ago that I loved you, and"—

He took her hand tenderly. "Soft eyes looked love to eyes that spoke again." Hope was swallowed up in bliss. Time was forgotten. Mrs. Moreton might have arrived all too soon. As Jack was again showering the pent-up love of years in kisses upon those sweet lips, Bertie rushed in for the morning paper. He fled, dumb. And she said, "Perhaps you had better go before mother comes."

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Jack left that villa in the intoxication of a new and sparkling delight. Life had no clouds, and the heart had no fear. Love—young, ardent, enthralling—had swept his life up the sunny slopes of the sublime.

CHAPTER XI

WHILST Parson Jack was turning his accidental meeting with Eva into a season of rich delight, Mrs. Moreton was calling upon the Vicar.

She had gone out to see what had become of Eliza's child, and had found it in a dying condition. She was so horrified at the conduct of the infant's father, that she went straight to see the Vicar; hence the delay, which had caused Jack to declare his passion to Eva before obtaining the formal permission of Mrs. Moreton.

The Rev. Joseph Amhurst was turned seventy, and he had been vicar thirty years. On Saturdays it was understood that visitors did not call, as he claimed that day for preparing his Sunday's sermon. He had begun life as a sturdy Evangelical ;

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but time had worn down some of his angles, and he had allowed the fashion of the rich, and the sentiment of the young, to carry him into decorations of the services, which, as a young man, he would have scorned as popish follies.

Mrs. Moreton had all the privileges of a lady, a widow, and a district visitor, and therefore did not hesitate to correct or criticise the venerable gentleman to his face. As a church-worker she felt it her duty to do so, for the good of the parish.

She found the Vicar surrounded with commentaries, written before modern science was in its infancy. The Vicar was not a brilliant scholar, and when he read divines of the early part of the 18th century, his "Fathers," he fancied he had found the undiluted teaching of the primitive church, or, as he styled it, "the sincere milk of the word." He was surprised at the visit, but he received Mrs. Moreton kindly.

She said, "My dear Vicar, I am terribly upset. I don't know where to begin first.

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I have just been to Jim Watson's house, and the child is dying, and the brute is drunk. Have you seen him? Could you not get him to sign the pledge? He is a disgrace to the parish!"

"My dear Mrs. Moreton, I am sorry you have been to the house just now. It only distresses you, all to no purpose. You see, I don't believe in the virtue of a pledge. I have told you this before. It is like trying to save souls by human means. You know, as well as I do, it is the blood of Christ which cleanseth us from sin. Jim needs a change of heart; nothing else will do him the least good. Salvation out of Christ is no salvation; so please do not ask Jim to sign the pledge."

"I should not ask him, and you know I would not put it in the place of religion if I did ask him; I thought it might be a step to something else. At present the man is almost outside the pale of civilisation."

"I distrust the worldly steps, Mrs. Moreton, they often lead to spiritual pride

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rather than life eternal. But I will ask Winson to try and see him."

"I named it to him the other day, but he was in one of his moods, and talked the wildest nonsense about him, and said that society made these men brutes."

"Did Winson say that? Is he a socialist?"

"I don't know; but he certainly said it."

"I will ask him about it. Socialism is another of those planks with which Satan bridges the way to eternal death. No curate of mine shall be suffered to name it."

"Oh, these young men of the present day, they have such notions! Bertie brought his friend, Tom Tate, to visit us. He is a clever young doctor, and I fear he does not believe in a future life."

The Vicar sprang from his chair and walked up and down the room excitedly, and perspiration stood on his brow. At length, panting hard for breath, he said vehemently, "And you allow such a man to stay in your family, and to be engaged

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to your daughter, Mrs. Moreton? Where are your principles? What account will you render to Almighty God for your stewardship?"

"My dear Vicar, do please sit down. I came to you a broken-hearted woman, seeking your help, and you only scold me!"

Tears were in her eyes, and hysteria in her voice, so the Vicar sat down and seemed penitent. Then she seized her advantage, and said, "Mr. Tate is not engaged to Eva! How can you say anything so dreadful! Who told you that?"

Silence.

"I insist upon knowing. It is a scandal, and might do Eva a great injury. My dear Vicar, do tell me who said anything so spiteful. I know you hate scandal as much as I do."

"I really can't tell you, for I do not know; I think someone told it to one of the servants. I am glad to learn it is not true. But do you not think it would be far wiser to send Mr. Tate away?"

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"Now, there is one of my great troubles. I got a book by Prebendary Reynolds, in which he proves immortality to be a physical fact, and Mr. Winson and he and Bertie have been reading this book aloud and discussing it, but they only make fun of it. Now, will *you* come in, Vicar, and convince them?"

"I? I—I do not know any science. I suppose this young fellow is an evolutionist, perhaps an out and out materialist; many doctors are, my brother tells me. I can't come. I never discuss. I am called to preach the gospel, and those who follow science, 'falsely so-called,' must do so at their own peril. Besides, you say Winson is there. He is a well-read man, and he surely can manage a couple of boys."

Here Mrs. Moreton looked mysterious, and dropped her voice, as she said, "Do you think Mr. Winson really believes in the future life?"

The eyes of the Vicar nearly started out of their sockets in his dismay; at length he gasped out, "What do you mean?"

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"Only this, he sits there and he lets the other two laugh at Prebendary Reynolds, and jeer at his statements. Now surely, if he really is sure of the future life, he might say so, and prove it. The early apostles used to go about *proving* the gospel, did they not?"

"I agree with you. He has no right to sit there and hear these things, and not reprove the young men. It is most serious. If I were only stronger I assure you no curate should be in this parish! What with their lawn tennis, and smoking, and new fads, they undo the work of one's lifetime! But I will see Winson. It is most serious."

"Mark you, Vicar, I did not say he does not believe in the future life. He never said so; but I did think he or you might come and correct that young Tate, and he certainly does not do that. And I wanted to ask you about Eliza. It was a shocking death. I hope you think her soul is safe."

Here conflicting emotions wrought their grand effect. Mrs. Moreton was "upset,"

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whether at Eliza's death, or at the horrible tenets of Tom, or at the scandal about her daughter, she probably did not know, but she wept copiously.

The poor old Vicar took her by the hand, and they knelt down to pray.

CHAPTER XII

MRS. MORETON returned home considerably agitated. She had forgotten Eliza's soul and infant, and also Tom Tate's frightful atheism, as she called it, in her alarm about the ugly rumour of Eva's engagement.

She was late for luncheon. She rushed into the drawing-room, and found Eva and Tom by the fire ; Tom lounging at his ease, and Eva looking radiantly happy. So she went up-stairs, and coming down encountered Bertie, who, partly from mischief and partly from pique, because he had not been let into the secret, said, "How late you are, mother ! Where have you been ?"

"I have been to see the Vicar, and he kept me rather a long time."

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"You have been arranging about the wedding, I suppose. Are the banns to be published to-morrow?"

At this moment Eva and Tom joined them in the hall, and they went in to lunch.

Bertie received such a look of warning from Eva, that he turned his attention away from his sister, and professed to be very hungry.

It was the first day since his accident that Tom had come down to lunch, and he was rather hilarious.

Eva was possessed by joy. It mantled in her cheeks, it sparkled in her eyes, it fired her brain, the dreams and the deep yearnings of years had found their fulfilment; love had opened the gate of paradise, to be sad or silent was an impossibility. She bubbled over with mirth and repartee. Tom had always admired her, with the cold, mature criticism of an undergraduate, but to-day he was fascinated by her beauty and her brilliance. So he yielded to the pleasure, to the great pain and confusion of Mrs. Moreton,

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This good woman might well be perplexed and annoyed. She had many excellent qualities, and was a living example of a well-ordered life if measured by the tape of Mrs. Grundy. She would have sacrificed her creed, or even her family china, rather than she would have been found wanting on a point of good form. Tom was her guest, and the friend of her son, therefore she could not have a scene at luncheon. But remembering what the Vicar had said, and with the words of Bertie still ringing in her ears, she could only give one explanation to the strange conduct of Eva and Tom. They so clearly understood one another, they were so abundantly happy, certainly there could only be this explanation—they were secretly engaged. To think she had been slighted and wronged, filled her with pain. Then she brooded over her humiliation in the eyes of the Vicar, for she had repudiated the rumour of their engagement as a scandal. This filled her with unspeakable annoyance. It severely taxed

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even the well-bred habit of long years to witness such conduct, and yet serve the apple-tart with politeness. At the earliest moment which decorum permitted, she rose from the table. As Eva did not intend to allow Bertie to be the first to tell her glad tidings, she instantly followed her mother to her own room. Here nature somewhat avenged herself for the enforced restraint of the last half-hour. Mrs. Moreton "took on." Eva had no chance of a word of explanation, such was the violence of her mother's feelings. She began at once—

"This is really unkind of you, Eva. You might have told me what was going on. I feel it deeply that you could not trust your mother. Fancy a girl becoming engaged without consulting her own mother! It is most unwomanly, ungrateful. In my time no daughter, except among the lower orders, would have dared do such a thing!"

"But, my dear mother, I have taken the first opportunity to"—

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"Now, that is nonsense. We live in the same house, you see me morning, noon, and night. Besides, what of him? I can never forgive him. I suppose he is gentleman enough to know he ought first to have asked my permission. If your poor father had been alive, of course— But a poor old widow is nobody. It is very cruel."

"But, mother, you will not hear me. He came and asked for you, before he proposed to me, only you were out."

"Out indeed! Why could he not have said something the other day, when we were having a talk about that horrid book? He did not want to tell me, or perhaps he had not found out he loved you then. I suppose this is going to be love in a cottage. I did not think you would throw yourself away on the first penniless boy who asked you?"

"Who is a penniless boy? I really do not see how you can say that."

"Well, what has Tom got in the way of wealth? he is"—

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"But, my dear mother!"—

"Yes, I know, he is clever! He cannot even earn his own food. When can he marry? Then you know he is an atheist if he owned the truth. You cannot expect God's blessing, Eva, on this. You have begun by deceiving your mother, and you will repent."

"But I am not engaged to Tom."

"Well, it is the same thing; and all the village knows. I heard of it this morning. To think I must hear of your engagement outside of my own house first."

"My dear mother, it is all a mistake; I am not engaged to Tom. He has never proposed to me, and if he were to I should refuse him promptly and for ever. I am engaged to Mr. Winson."

Mrs. Moreton sank back in her chair, almost asphyxiated with astonishment.

Eva began, "Mr. Winson has been offered the living of Telby. It is not a very rich living, but it has a lovely old vicarage and more than one hundred pounds a year clear. He has money of his own, and he will

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have more. He came to the drawing-room this morning and asked for you, and wanted your advice and your permission to propose to me, because he would not accept the living unless I would consent to marry him. He has only known of this since Thursday morning ; and he has been perfectly honourable. I have loved Jack for years, and I was not going to put on a mask and play battledore and shuttlecock with the only man with whom I am ready to live and die."

"Well, it is not so bad as I thought. You might have told me before lunch, as well as Bertie."

"I never told Bertie anything."

"Well, he knows. I hope you did not tell Mr. Winson that you had loved him for years."

"Certainly I did. Why not?"

"It is so indelicate. In my time a girl would have taken a week to consider it, and she would have referred him to her mother first. I am surprised you do not see that, Eva."

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"Well, mother, we won't quarrel over that point. It is I who love him, and it is I who am going to marry him."

Mrs. Moreton had really made a great fuss this time for very little, and as she was very fond of Jack, Eva got off lightly for this breach of decorum.

They sent for Bertie and told him, and, though it was hardly a surprise, it unsealed his lips, and he rejoiced so sincerely with Eva that it greatly increased her happiness.

The one who really gained by the unnecessary storm of Mrs. Moreton was Jack, for when he came to see her about three, he found that she knew all, and his task was light. Mrs. Moreton could not permit herself to jubilate in Jack's presence, and she told him with stately dignity that she forgave his impetuosity in not waiting to ask for permission, mainly because he had tried to do so. Then she asked many questions about Telby, and admitted that really it was the proper life for Eva, as her grandfather had been a prebendary,

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and Eva was devoted to church work. Jack was so glad that the formality was over, that he was sweetness itself, and so Mrs. Moreton was soothed. Plans were formed for her and Eva to accompany him to Telby, and then she would return, and Jack would take Eva to his home.

At afternoon tea the young fellows heartily congratulated Jack, and showed their sincerity by getting out of the way as soon as possible. Mrs. Moreton also remembered to leave them. Eva turned to the piano and played two or three pieces which Jack had always liked, and which she had often played alone till they pulsed with hope which died away into voiceless yearning, when Jack and love and home seemed to have vanished into the night of a young heart's despair. But now he knelt beside her, as she played in the twilight, and the rapture of unuttered bliss thrilled them. The moon had risen; the music had ceased, and a passion more subtle than its own awoke still deeper rapture.

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Jack was pressed to stay to dinner, but he durst not. To-morrow's sermon was to make ; and he felt he must write and tell the Vicar of this offer of Telby, and of his engagement.

On reaching his lodgings at seven, there was a note from the Vicar saying that he would take both sermons to-morrow. Jack would not have been surprised had the Vicar asked him to take them both, so this sudden change caused him no pain. He had been a curate so long, that he was accustomed to obey, "nor ask the reason why."

He wrote to the Vicar ; he wrote to the bishop and accepted Telby ; he wrote home and told them of his engagement, and that he was now going to Telby.

Later, he was walking past Spring Villa, too happy to stay indoors, and, by some extraordinary power, the sight of the drawing-room window helped to assure him that the delights of this day were not merely those of a happy dream. The moonlight and the starlight seemed to

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mingle their messages of some infinite pomp, whose pageantry was bliss made manifest, for, whatever may be the fate of religion or science, love pants for an immortality.

CHAPTER XIII

THE old Vicar had been so thoroughly alarmed at Mrs. Moreton's report about Jack and the discussion, that he had determined to preach both sermons on Sunday to avoid any possibility of a scandal until he had assured himself of Jack's freedom from every taint of heresy.

When he received the note informing him of the bishop's offer of Telby to Jack, the poor Vicar was greatly alarmed. A curate who indulges in mild heresy is easily dealt with by the vulgar process of no employment and starvation, but it is not always so simple a matter with the incumbent who enjoys a freehold in the church militant.

Sunday was a day of great excitement at Thingford. Nearly everybody in the

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parish knew by noon of the gift of a *rich* living, and of the engagement.

The two lovers met at ten in the most unromantic of all situations—a Sunday school. This institution of torture was regarded as necessary for the well-being of the young in Thingford. As a matter of fact, it taught them to loathe the name of Sunday, and gave them a specially keen relish for “Sabbath breaking.” Still, as there are few circumstances in which young love is not radiant, Jack and Eva found it a pleasure to be even in the same Sunday school. Congratulations were showered upon them during the day.

On Monday morning at ten, Jack somewhat reluctantly kept his appointment with the young men. He began by saying, “Had we not better stop these discussions? The Prebendary has broken down completely, and it is not worth while going on.”

The two young men tried to look like sages of deep experience, as if they knew the real reason why he wished to

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discontinue these talks. At length Tom said, "Just as you like, of course. But, if you don't mind, let me point out two or three rich things."

Jack assented.

TOM. "Now he opens Research XV. with a heading ending thus, 'Evil is some imprisoned good working unto liberty.' This, I think, is very charitable of the Prebendary, for the only thing evil need do is to work, and the more it works the sooner it will be out; and when it is out, lo! it is no longer evil, but good. On page 116, he says, 'Judging from the past, and into what the present is advancing, the existing universe is as an infant in the arms of the Almighty.'"

BERTIE. "Perhaps the world is put out to nurse them; this might account for the beastly cruelties of it."

TOM. "He says, on page 118, 'We are not merely cunning casts in clay.' I think this is a distinctly unfair innuendo. It is a view which a theologian might perhaps fairly hold, but no scientific man could

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even imagine it. In fact, except the author of Genesis, I do not know of any dreamer who ever seriously supposed we were 'casts in clay.' On page 119 the good Prebendary surpasses himself. He found rather a fine sonnet, written by Alfred Austin, on 'Love's Blindness,' to some lovely girl. He takes this sonnet, omits a few words, and inserts 'O God'; then it reads remarkably comic when we remember its original intention, and that now it is to prove all things move within the range of God's presence—

'But when Thy feet flutter the dark, and Thou
With orient eyes dawnest on my distress,
Suddenly sings a bird on every bough,
The heavens expand, the earth grows less and less.' "

BERTIE. "Glorious! The feet fluttering and the orient eyes dawning are indeed grand! What an old idolater he must be! Does he say why it was originally written?"

TOM. "No; I do not think he knew. On page 121, he is quite savage. He

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says, 'That permanent rebellion against truth, atheism, the confirmed disorder of a life without loving, reverent principle, is *unnatural*.' Yet he told us above that all things were produced by a response to the supernatural, so I suppose atheism was. At anyrate, it is a part of the all. On page 131, he says, 'The unique accuracy, in union with the mysterious grandeur of this progress, humbles yet exalts every man who is able to know the truth. The Divine Idea in its completeness, is that toward which the universe is moving. The history of worlds, of angels, of men, is a mighty drama, extending through immeasurable time, presented on the platform of infinitude, with the sky for canopy, the suns for lamps, God for Author.' How can a man who admits (page 115) the waste of life to be so great that beings 'perish by millions,' speak of nature's progress as one of 'unique accuracy'? Call it universal experimenting, or unique murder, and there may be some truth in the term."

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BERTIE. "Then look at the bathos of the closing lines, 'suns for lamps.' All these are figures, not very true figures either, and yet he would resent it if anyone said it is a mere figure of speech to say 'God is the Author.' But Jack seems very weary of it all; have we nearly done?"

TOM. "Yes, nearly. But I would like the parson to tell us if he thinks the Prebendary could know anything of the 'Divine idea in its completeness'?"

PARSON JACK. "Certainly not. He is only talking musty metaphysics."

TOM. "Well, now listen to two or three more, page 133, 'Love and Wisdom encircle the seraph and the glow-worm, and it is a physical fact that the issues of the life of each are immortal.' Comment is useless. What can he know about the physical fact of the issues of the life of a seraph? Page 177, 'The inner life of every man is a wonder greater than any marvel of romance. There is in the silent endurance of sufferings a force sublime that physical

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science cannot interpret.' If this silent endurance is proof of a spiritual, supernatural something in man, then how about the ass? I fancy he would beat most prebendaries in 'the silent endurance of sufferings'!

"On page 189, he says, 'The individuality of man, *the stable compound of spiritual elements*, is, as to the body, an aggregation of similar, not the same, material particles into identical corporeal structure; and the soul's individuality is of two chief parts: the understanding, or rational power apprehending; and the will, the rational power moving. The life-power which continuously weaves the elements into our present body, or outer person, will, with a subtler power belonging to the inner man, *weave refined elements* into the continuous identity of our future body. The soul-power even now fashioning the inner man into more intimate relations with the Spirit of Intelligence at the heart of things; it now possesses more life with the lapse of life; is already preparing for the new

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body, and for higher state in the new world.'

"We have not time to examine half the doubtful statements of this not very clear passage. It may safely be stated that no such thing as a 'stable compound' of any sort is known to man, and nowhere in the world has anyone yet made out a list of 'spiritual elements' which can be tested by any method known to science. And how these '*spiritual* elements' can be an 'aggregation of *material* particles' is a secret known only to a prebendary. His statement that 'the life-power' 'belonging to the inner man, will weave refined elements into the continuous identity of our future body,' is contrary to any revealed or known doctrine of resurrection. It is nowhere proposed that the life-power or soul will come to earth, and begin in some womb to take infinitesimal grains of dust or flesh or flower, and weave refined elements into a future body. So this proves nothing. It merely states Brother Reynolds' theory, and that theory is not resurrection.

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“But lower down ‘the soul-power’ is fashioning ‘the inner man’ for ‘the new body.’ Now, what does he mean? The ‘life-power’ ‘belonging to the inner man,’ *will weave* refined elements into the future body, ‘the soul-power’ is fashioning the inner man for the new body! Now, where does the inner man wait, whilst the ‘life-power’ weaves the new body? It would seem that ‘the inner man’ is complete before the new body is commenced, then how is this complete inner man to make a nest in a few grains of ‘refined elements,’ and begin to ‘weave’ a new body? And as the new body is ‘continuous’ by this process of weaving, where do the old elements go? Dear Brother Prebendary, you cannot keep on ‘weaving refined elements’ into your new body, without throwing out some elements (refined or otherwise), for consider how fat you would become, and perchance infinite! *Your* spiritual body, then, is subject to the laws of growth, viz. loss and decay and the acquisition of new forces. In that case,

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I fail to see how you can do without dinners—but you cannot find immortality by dining out!

“On page 202 he is maintaining that prophetic power is suggestive of immortality, and there occurs this highly sensational passage, ‘Whither the thought can fly, and whither emotion can proceed, thither may go the power represented by them; even as does the power of which mechanical processes are the exhibition. *It is no reply* to say, “I see and foresee that the wind, continuing in such a point, will arrive at America, whither I shall never go,” for, *in fact, the mind does go* thither, in the sense that it anticipates things, or time, or place, by mentally and emotionally thrusting itself forward with some degree of realisation. If we had no such power of making the future real, *at least in our mind*, we should be able to think without any foundation for thought, and apart from definite aim or purpose; but that is absurd.’

“Very well, Mr. Prebendary, we must

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believe you, for you are so comforting! Your argument is, 'I can foresee that this wind will go to America, *therefore I go to America*, because the mind does go thither,' etc.

"In like manner, I think of a future life, by imagination I see it and arrange it and know it, and this is strong proof that there must be one, and I shall get there; otherwise I should 'be able to think without any foundation for thought,' which is 'absurd'!

"Now, this is good news to all imaginative men. For instance, I think of an island in far-off seas, or of a sparkling world floating on a rainbow; and in imagination I see the beautiful fair-haired women, who never die, they walk on fields of gold in which grow trees of diamonds. On every tree hangs a mysterious harp, and every passing breeze fills the air with music; therefore they must exist or I could not imagine them, for I should be thinking 'apart from definite aim or purpose, but that is absurd.'

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“This is most cheering, for by imagining them I know that they are real, that I can enjoy them, and that some day I shall, as a ‘physical fact.’ When those women who never die gather me fruit in that star, floating on a rainbow, I shall not forget you, Prebendary.

“So now, *au revoir*, Parson; no more Reynolds till we meet him on the island of dreams.”

CHAPTER XIV

AT two o'clock Jack called as usual upon his Vicar. It is difficult to emphasize sufficiently the alarm of the Vicar with regard to Jack's perilous heresy. His own youngest brother had studied medicine, had become an evolutionist, and finally a pronounced agnostic. Now, Mr. Amhurst's faith was narrow, but strong, and the awful fate of his youngest brother daily reminded him of the perils of unbelief. He used to give himself to prayer whenever he heard of a bishop who said man did not, by nature, possess an immortal soul, or of a dean who said the resurrection was not physical, or of a canon who said there was no devil, or of another canon who said all the Bible was not inspired. He regarded all these as signs of the final

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apostate age predicted by the apostle long ago. There must be added to this his great esteem for Mrs. Moreton, and his great mistake with regard to the cause of her distress and tears on the occasion of her last visit. He experienced all the apprehension of which rigid orthodoxy and aged timidity is capable.

So when Jack arrived, instead of receiving the warm God-speed usual under the circumstances, he received timid congratulations, and they proceeded to the parish work, as they ordinarily did on Mondays. This over, the Vicar said, "Have you quite decided to accept Telby?"

"Yes, quite. I wrote to the bishop and accepted his offer yesterday."

"Then you won't mind my saying to you, as you are leaving, that I should certainly avoid any scientific discussion of religion if I were you. I know Mrs. Moreton was greatly distressed on Saturday by the absence of faith, and any real godliness, in her son, and his friend who is staying there."

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"She expressed her concern to me about young Tate."

"And you have been reading some book with those young fellows. It is dangerous—very dangerous—to treat our holy mysteries as if they were fit subjects for investigation. Do you think you did any good?"

"I am afraid not. The conditions of the discussion were too limited. We examined a book by Prebendary Reynolds, who says immortality is a physical fact. All we had to do was to see whether his arguments were sound."

"And how did you find them?"

"Usually we found them ludicrous."

"That is a very strong term to apply to a book by one of our superior clergy."

"I am afraid we applied stronger terms than that. When a man undertakes to manufacture a new science, without any logic, and dedicates his book to Temple, our only scientific bishop, he must take his deserts, whether he is one of the superior clergy or not."

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"Now, now, Winson, that is not reverent. Dr. Temple has seen the error of his ways, since his first great mistake, and it is not quite fair to brand him as scientific. I hear he is truly godly since he was made bishop. But did you not bear witness to the faith as to the resurrection and immortality?"

"My faith was not the point in discussion. In fact, it was not a matter of faith at all. It was a matter of knowledge of a physical fact."

"Yes, yes; but we can always bear witness to the truth, in season and out of season, you know, Winson. Have you any doubt about the resurrection of the body?"

"In what way do you mean?"

"In the only way. Are you quite sure that this same body of mine will rise from the grave, when the trump doth sound, and meet the Lord in the air?"

"We should have to settle exactly what is meant by the same body. You know, when we open old coffins, there is often

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nothing left but a few particles of dust ; and, in the cases of rotten coffins, the particles of dust may long since have passed into other living bodies."

"That is it, you doubt, you quibble. Did not the Almighty make the world before there was any dust? and doth it seem a hard thing unto you that He should raise a dead body? My dear fellow, how can you expect God's blessing in your new parish, if you are going in this half-hearted manner. Flee from doubt as you would flee from murder! You distress me. Let us kneel down."

Jack was sorry for this storm in a tea-cup, but he quickly forgot it. He had had worse vicars than poor old Amhurst, and he was soon to be freed from this ecclesiastical espionage, which saps the manhood of many curates in the long-run ; he could afford to smile at an old man's worry.

He visited some sick people till tea, then wrote letters to friends, and about eight arrived at Spring Villa, where one

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joyous heart beat more quickly at the sound of his footsteps.

Tuesday's papers announced his preferment—and his engagement in some cases. Congratulations showered upon him, in consequence, from old college friends of whom he had known nothing for years. Every hour was full of excitement, and the excitement was the outward and visible sign of measureless joy within.

Jack was busy also getting the necessary papers signed, and writing to the bishop and his secretary relative to his institution and induction, and the payment of those exorbitant fees by which mother-church fleeces her new-born incumbents.

CHAPTER XV

AT the end of the week, the church papers announced Jack's preferment, and those whose editors favoured the Vicar, spoke in glowing terms of his past, and gave him hearty good wishes for success in the new sphere to which Providence had called him. The week had been a great novelty in Jack's experience, the excitement of joy and hope gave life a wider meaning, and the man new possibilities. He began to understand why successful men usually labour under the delusion that they are of importance in the world. Mankind grovels before the successful, and burns the incense of adulation daily, till the inflated mortal forgets his fame and power will burst like a bubble and be no more known.

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The rain came down in a deluge, but letters of greeting every morning, and hours of love with Eva every day, had raised him to that fabled home of the gods, where the storms never come and snow or rain never falls.

Mrs. Moreton was less joyous, though scarcely less excited. She renewed her youth by entering into all Eva's plans; and, though memories sometimes awakened tears, she was satisfied and happy. She was only waiting for the weather to improve, that she might go to Telby and see the vicarage. Already there had been discussions about the date of the wedding, but it was not yet fixed.

On the Monday following this first week of joyous excitement, Jack received a letter from the bishop, asking him to call on the following morning. Jack, supposing this to be a plan to save letters, took his cheque-book with him, so that he might pay the fees to the secretary, and, if possible, accelerate the movements of this slow official. On reaching the palace, he was

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at once shown into the library, and he was received by the lordly official with cold restraint. The bishop, however, soon explained this frozen condition of affairs, by saying, "I sent for you, Mr. Winson, because I am in a great difficulty. In all cases of my patronage I make it a rule to select the most fitting clergyman for the vacancy, and therefore I offered you Telby, though there are older men who would eagerly accept it."

Jack bowed his appreciation of the compliment. The bishop continued, "I have not yet received your letters testimonial; but quite by accident, last week, I met dear old Mr. Amhurst, and he sought my advice on a very delicate question. You know he ought to sign your 'letters,' but he is gravely concerned about you, because he is not sure you believe in the resurrection of our blessed Lord, therefore"—

"Really, my lord, I think"—

"Allow me, Mr. Winson, if you please. You shall make any explanation afterwards. Do not, I beg you, think that Mr. Amhurst

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in any sense reported you or your opinions. You must recognise that, by the providence of Almighty God, I am set over this diocese; and you will also recognise that the faith of the clergy is the one hope of England's salvation in this age of dissent and antinomianism. Mr. Amhurst, therefore, feeling his great responsibility, sought my advice before signing your letters testimonial, which redounds to his credit as a faithful steward of holy mysteries. I gather from him that one of his most valued church-workers has been greatly perturbed by something you have said with regard to immortality, and that she had wept bitterly in his presence. I think he has spoken to you on the subject, and your answers did not quite assure him that you are sound in the faith. Now, Mr. Winson, I hope you have confidence in me, and therefore I ask you to be quite frank, as it is a grave question."

"In the first place, my lord, I would suggest that there has been some misunderstanding and some exaggeration with

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regard to the distress of the said church-worker."

"Have a care, Mr. Winson; this is strong language to use of your spiritual superior—remember he is still your vicar."

"I do remember, my lord; but this very church-worker is the lady who has consented to my being engaged to her only daughter, so that she cannot think I have seriously erred from the faith."

"Let me ask, did she consent to this engagement *after* you were offered this preferment, or *before*?"

"After, my lord."

"Then I should attach no importance to your explanation, so far; for I am told, in this degenerate age, mothers will even sell their daughters to men who no longer profess the faith of our most holy Church."

His lordship gave a bishop's triumphant smile.

He continued, "What is it, Mr. Winson? Are you an evolutionist?"

"As far as I understand evolution I am an evolutionist."

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“That is a very dangerous doctrine for a young man to hold, and if it turns you a hair’s-breadth from the Catholic faith of the primitive church, I unhesitatingly say it unfits you for the solemn responsibility of having charge of a parish in my diocese. Are you prepared to subscribe with your whole heart to the Thirty-nine Articles?”

“I am ready to sign them, my lord, if it is your custom to ask all new incumbents to sign them some days before their institution.”

The bishop’s upper lip grew stiff as the Athanasian Creed, and his face flushed with a glow which was not heavenly, and he said, with the slow pomp of supreme power, “Mr. Winson, your answer does not satisfy me. Of course you are aware I am not compelled to institute you to Telby.”

“Quite so, my lord.”

“The poor country folk of that district require loving care and the sincere milk of the word. They seldom go to church; and if you are going to talk science to

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them, their last state will verily be worse than their first. As God's shepherd, entrusted with the care of His flock, for which I must give an account at the last day, I solemnly warn you, Mr. Winson, that you are in danger of imperilling the souls of your flock."

"Would it meet the case, my lord, if I write you a note declining Telby?"

"At present that would be the best; it will give you time to reflect. And if there is anything I can do to save you from confusion, I am absolutely at your service."

Jack bowed his thanks; then he took out the bishop's letter, which had brought such joy into his life, and wrote a formal note on the back of it, declining the living with thanks; and passing this to the bishop, he said, "Will that meet the case, my lord?"

"Quite. Nothing could be better."

Jack rose to go.

The bishop continued, "Now, if I were you, I would seek a curacy in some large town. I will place no barrier in your way."

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Do not read science, do not think upon difficulties, but pray and work, and you will find it all come right."

The bishop prayed for divine light—for Jack.

The living was lost for ever.

CHAPTER XVI

WHEN Jack had left the warm library, and found himself in a cold, beating rain, with two miles to walk to the station, he began to realise the misery of his position.

The bishop had roused him to such indignation by his injustice, that he had taken the only course open to a *man*—but a *curate* ought to have been more humbly obedient. The whole thing had arisen from a trifle, and was indeed most unjust ; still, Jack ought to have known that no officials can smile and slay like the officials of that religion of humility and love given to the world by a Nazarene Carpenter.

He had, however, forgotten this, and there was no time to think of it now. The dream of love and loyalty and duty at

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Telby had fled. And after all his waiting he had misled Eva. Here was the misery of his disappointment. All else was nothing; but to return to her and throw a cloud over her radiant joy, was indeed the bitterness of death. He was bewildered, crushed; a paralysing torpor seemed to steal over his faculties.

To gain a few hours for thought he went home instead of returning to Thingford. His blank misery grieved his mother deeply. His father could hardly understand what it was all about, for he scarcely knew anything of evolution, and he knew still less of immortality. Like most busy, successful men of business, he could not have said honestly that the doctrine of a future life ever really entered into his affairs. Notwithstanding the fact that his son was a curate, he shared somewhat in the general feeling of contempt which most business men cherish towards the clergy outside of a church. He had never wished Jack to be a parson, and now he saw the misery of failure crushing his life, he deeply

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regretted that he had not pressed him into business, where a man does his duty and thinks what he likes.

The night brought little sleep to Jack ; he rose feeling he must return to Thingford by the first train, and that his only honourable course was to see Eva at once, and tell her all ; and, if he could, he must offer to release her from her engagement.

On reaching his lodgings other letters full of congratulations awaited him. They seemed an empty mockery, like the wreaths which passionate love places on the corpse of a bride. So he hurried away to Spring Villa. The lovers had not met since Monday, and what a lifetime of misery had flowed through those few hours to one of them. Jack tried to hide his sorrow at first, but her warm, loving greeting and her radiant joy filled him with unspeakable anguish. She fetched letters to show him, and poured out her rapture and her adoration, and said they would congratulate her still more warmly when they knew him.

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Suddenly she exclaimed, "My dear Jack, are you ill?"

"No, darling; I am overwhelmed with disappointment. It is most terrible to have to come to you in this way. I am not going to Telby, after all."

"Not—going—to—Telby?" she asked slowly, and she grew pale as she looked upon his agonised face.

He composed himself, and told her of the interview with the bishop; but he made no reference to Mrs. Moreton. When he had finished the story of his blighted hopes, Eva smiled triumphantly, and said, "Now I am more than ever proud of you, Jack. I always said you were different from any other clergyman I knew, and you have proved it. I am ashamed of the bishop and our Vicar! All this just because mother unwisely talked with the Vicar the day on which we were engaged."

"How do you know it is through her?"

"Oh, she told me that she thought she had frightened the Vicar about you."

"I am sorry you know this, but if

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possible we must not let her know that, even unintentionally, she has been the cause of this misfortune."

"I do not see what we can do. It is so difficult to explain. Dear old Telby! I shall always love it, though I may never see it."

"As I look back upon my interview with the bishop, I am quite amazed to think I have thrown away so much, when perhaps a little tact might have kept it all."

"Not so, darling; a great deal of hypocrisy might have kept it, and with that you could not have been the same dear old Jack."

"But, my pet, do you realise that all is gone? It is most kind of you to take it so bravely—and I do not feel so nearly dead as I did when I stood outside the door—but everything is gone."

"You can get another living. This diocese is not all the world."

"No; but you may rest assured I shall never be able to enter any diocese in which my dreadful heresy will not be the

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first thing told to my new bishop. Every bishop keeps his black list, and if a man is not too bad to be allowed to go into another parish, his vices, at anyrate, precede him to the new bishop."

"Do you not think that is peculiarly mean of the bishops?"

"In most things, except religion, it would be considered mean; but, you see, they flatter themselves they are preserving the Catholic faith, which is another name for divine truth."

"What rubbish!"

"I believe it is really so with some of them, darling. You know old Amhurst would not hurt a fly, and yet he takes all this unnecessary trouble to blight the lives of the two happiest people in his parish."

"Not blight them, dearest. He may try, but so long as we love each other, blight cannot touch us."

"No, not really; but our home is gone, our prospects are gone. You see, I cannot stay here; the Vicar would not keep me. And even if I find another curacy, I shall

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be miles away from you, and I may wait years before another living is offered. I feel I have deceived you—as if I had got your consent to our engagement under false pretences. Do you think you will ever regret that ? ”

“Never ; the dream was too lovely. And I shall feel it awfully that you must go away, and begin all over again in some fresh diocese, but such evils we can conquer or bear—*we* are not altered.”

“My sweetest and bravest, you have given me strength to bear all things, and even the cruelties of religion will not make me tremble now.”

CHAPTER XVII

THE lovers gained strength from each other's devotion, in this their first calamity. As soon as Jack felt that Eva had the courage to rise above a most mortifying disappointment, he regained his good spirits and energy, though perhaps even he, then, underestimated the many difficulties which were before them.

It was as humiliating as if they had committed some serious crime, to have to tell their friends and the parishioners that he had not accepted Telby ; and, in the absence of the real explanation, some conjectures were made as to the cause of the change which were not at all complimentary to Jack.

In vain the lovers tried to conceal from Mrs. Moreton that it had come to pass

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through her careless words to the Vicar. When she found out this, in the fury of self-reproach, she was nearly beside herself. She hastened to the Vicar, and for an hour and a half she attempted to exhaust the English language in finding terms to convince him that he had outraged every law of friendship, every custom of good breeding, and every principle of the Christian religion. She reduced him to such a state of pulp that he took to his bed for a fortnight. She next told her private friends the whole matter. These imparted the outrageous secret to their private friends, and never had the afternoon teas of Thingford been so full of absorbing interest. The parish divided itself into two parties; one keenly censured the Vicar as a meddler, and the other praised him for his marvellous conscientiousness.

All this added pangs to Jack and Eva. Annoyance met them everywhere; but Jack quietly discharged all the duties of the parish till the Vicar recovered. When

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the Vicar had regained his strength, Jack was no longer needed, for he had asked to leave at the end of the month when he had accepted Telby, and to this agreement they kept.

Tom and Bertie were wrought to a high pitch of indignation, and thought they had found additional proofs that official Christians are the last persons to be affected by their own creed, and from this day forward they joined the ever increasing ranks of those respectable church people who never attend church.

Five months had passed since Jack's interview with the bishop, and he had found no curacy, though he had applied for dozens. Something always went wrong during the negotiations. He still had rooms in Thingford, but usually he spent his Sundays at home, and two or three times he had taken duty elsewhere. Eva had given up her Sunday-school work and her district. She seemed to have passed into mature womanhood by a single step.

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In this misfortune, arising from a trifling and really innocent proceeding, she had read many lessons of men and things. By a single flash she had seen that injustice, which is perhaps the chief factor of all civilisation yet, and she had learnt that the brutality of man is still his strongest principle ; these facts added a deeper solemnity to life, and in her grand heroism she was ready to make a bold strike for freedom.

Early in March Jack's Uncle George died rather suddenly, and left him a farm of one hundred acres, and nearly two hundred pounds a year. After the funeral he took Eva for her second visit to his parents, and they went the next day to see the farm. It was a small, well-built house ; the furniture and the stock were just as they were when his uncle died, and the shepherd and his wife were in charge of the house. It was a bright, bracing day, and their young hearts rejoiced. Jack said, "Darling, I should like to come and live here."

"And be a farmer?"

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“ Yes ; and turn my back on the classes, and live with nature.”

“ It would be glorious ! ”

“ Shall we do so ? ”

“ I wish you would.”

“ Then that is settled, we will come here as soon as possible.”

“ But how about your Orders ? ”

“ They may slide, and become a thing of the past. I have done with them.”

“ Then will you allow me to dispense with banns in church, when we are married ? I so dislike them.”

“ Certainly ; and I would go further than that. There are few things so indelicate as a wedding, or so indecent as the marriage service. Now, will you be married at the registrar’s office, or at home ? ”

“ Anywhere. And do let us dispense with the usual fuss and rubbish ; no bridesmaids, no bouquets or veils, or any of that semi-barbarism.”

“ I should vastly prefer a quiet wedding.”

So it was settled. So it was done.

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Mrs. Moreton was shocked, but she had gone through so much lately that she allowed this to pass the more readily.

On a glorious afternoon in May, Jack and his bride arrived at the farm. They had been married that morning, and they were going to carve out life for themselves on the elementary principles of being happy and trying to make others happy. Many such attempts have failed, but so far theirs has succeeded.

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